

INDIAN AND PERSIAN DRAWINGS



SAM FOGG

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Catalogue by Diana Luber

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INTRODUCTION

This exhibition brings together twenty master drawings by the great court artists of early modern India and Persia. The catalogue includes examples of exquisite draughtsmanship by three of the greatest of all Mughal artists, Basawan (fl. 1580–1600), Govardhan (fl. 1596–1645), and Payag (fl. 1591–1658). It proceeds with a selection of Persian drawings which includes two works on paper attributed to the most accomplished of all Persian draughtsmen, Reza ‘Abbasi (c. 1565–1635) alongside a magnificent sheet by the Safavid master of *Farangi-sazi*, or the new ‘European style’ of the late seventeenth century, Muhammad Zaman (fl. 1649–1704).

The catalogue opens with a portrait of a beautiful Indian woman in the costume of a European allegorical figure by Basawan, the most celebrated painter at the court of Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605). It is followed by a rare and intimate masterpiece by Govardhan (fl. 1596–1645; cat. 4). This scene of erotic love shows the Mughal Prince Murad Bakhsh and his wife moments before the consummation of their marriage, depicted in the guise of ‘Adam and Eve’ by the Flemish artist Bartholomeus Spranger (1546–1611). A tinted drawing of two figures in a landscape by the great court artist Payag draws on Dutch landscape sources to illustrate an atmospheric and distinctively Indian nocturnal scene of two ascetics (cat. 3).

In addition to stand-alone drawings and court portraiture, this group includes sheets and preparatory drawings from dispersed epic and poetic manuscripts which were produced at the Indian and Persian court ateliers. These include an important page from the first Baburnama of c. 1589 (cat. 2) and a preparatory sketch for the ‘Second Guler’ or ‘Tehri-Garhwal’ Gita Govinda (cat. 5). An important and dated Turkoman school illustration from 1496 AD depicts the death of Shirin, the queen of Persia, from a copy of the *Shahnama* (cat. 13), while two illustrations from the epic love poem of *Layla and Majnun* originate from lavish manuscripts produced at the Persianate courts of Bukhara and Shiraz (cats. 14–15).

Two impressive drawings attributed to Reza ‘Abbasi include a dynamic scene of a leopard chasing a bear (cat. 16) and an important drawing of a forlorn mendicant (cat. 17), which was later copied by Reza’s most talented student, Mu‘in Musavvir. These dynamic, psychological compositions employ the bold and fluid calligraphic line that defined the revolutionary Isfahan style of the seventeenth century and marked Reza out from his contemporaries as the foremost artist of his generation. The final entry in the catalogue is an impressive sheet attributed to Muhammad Zaman (cat. 20), depicting the legendary hero Bahram Gur facing down the dragon.



1

Attributed to Basawan (fl. 1580–1600)

Portrait of a woman as a European allegorical figure

The beautiful Indian woman depicted in the guise of a composite European allegorical figure in this elegant, tinted brush drawing was made by the Mughal master Basawan (fl. 1580–1600). Basawan was the greatest painter at the court of Emperor Akbar I (r. 1556–1605), where he and the other artists in the imperial workshop were encouraged to take up Christian themes, techniques and iconography in their oeuvres. Basawan was the most successful artist in this respect and he is included in the *Akbarnama*, an account of the reign of Emperor Akbar I by the Mughal historian and grand vizier Abu'l Fazl (1551–1602), where he is listed as one of the leading artists working in the atelier. Basawan contributed to a number of important, lavish courtly manuscripts commissioned for Akbar, including the *Tutinama* of 1560–65, the *Razmnama* of 1582–86, the *Timurnama* of 1584, the *Ramayana* of 1588, and the *Akbarnama* of 1590. In addition to these significant contributions to the imperial manuscript production, Basawan was a skilled portraitist known for his fluid assimilation of European naturalism and forms. In particular, he is celebrated for the development and use of the *nim-qalam* brush drawing technique in a group of works that emulate European engravings and grisaille techniques. Basawan reached his apogee as a painter around 1585–90, when this enigmatic drawing of a beautiful woman was rendered using the same *nim-qalam* brush-drawing technique. The drawing, which was re-mounted, tinted and gilded later in its history, giving it the present devotional aspect, draws on multiple European print sources. It is one of a small group of only five known allegorical brush drawings made by Basawan in this style, four of which are in the collection of the Musée Guimet, Paris (see Okada, 1991, figs. 6–9).

This drawing of a beautiful woman depicted in three-quarters profile probably draws on multiple European print sources, which were in circulation at the Mughal court after arriving in the hands of Jesuit missionaries, diplomats, and travellers. Here, the female figure holds an open book in front of her chest with one hand, while the middle finger of the other hand marks her place in the same text. She wears a diaphanous, ruffled dress through which her breasts are visible, and an elaborate headdress set with jewels is topped with a plume. She has the elegant modelled facial features of a classical Indian beauty, with an elongated nose, almond-shaped eyes, strong brows, and a lock of hair escaping from her headdress. Along with the golden bangles that decorate her wrists, these elements mark the work out as the portrait of an enigmatic Indian woman in the pose and costume of a European allegorical figure. The portrait was probably cropped out of a larger composition, so it is impossible to know its original context. The European sources for this portrait include the allegorical figure of *Pietas Regia*, the female representation of the piety of Philip II of Spain as protector of the Catholic faith, which appears on the second title page to Christophe Plantin's 'Royal Polyglot Bible' (fig. 1). The Polyglot Bible, which was commissioned by Philip II and printed by Plantin in Antwerp c. 1568–72, was presented at the court of Akbar by Jesuit missionaries on 5 March 1580. Like

India, Mughal
c. 1585–90

5.9 x 4.1 cm (drawing); 11.9 x 9.3 cm (sheet); Brush and ink heightened with gouache and gold on paper, the portrait cropped and repurposed to form an oval portrait, the golden halo and border also added at the time of re-mounting; laid down on stout paper.

Provenance

Stuart Cary Welch, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1928–2008), acquired 1966
Sven Gahlin Collection, until 2015

Exhibited & Published

In the Image of Man, Hayward Gallery, London, 1982, no.237 (attributed to Manohar)



Fig. 1

Detail of the *Pietas Regia* frontispiece with the female representation of the piety of Philip II of Spain from Christophe Plantin's Royal Polyglot Bible. Commissioned by Philip II and printed by Christophe Plantin, Antwerp c. 1568–72

Fig. 2

Basawan (fl. 1580–1600),
Group of three young women.
India, Mughal. Late 16th–early
17th century. 19.5 x 11.7 cm;
gouache on paper. Paris, Musée
Guimet, inv. OA 3619 j a

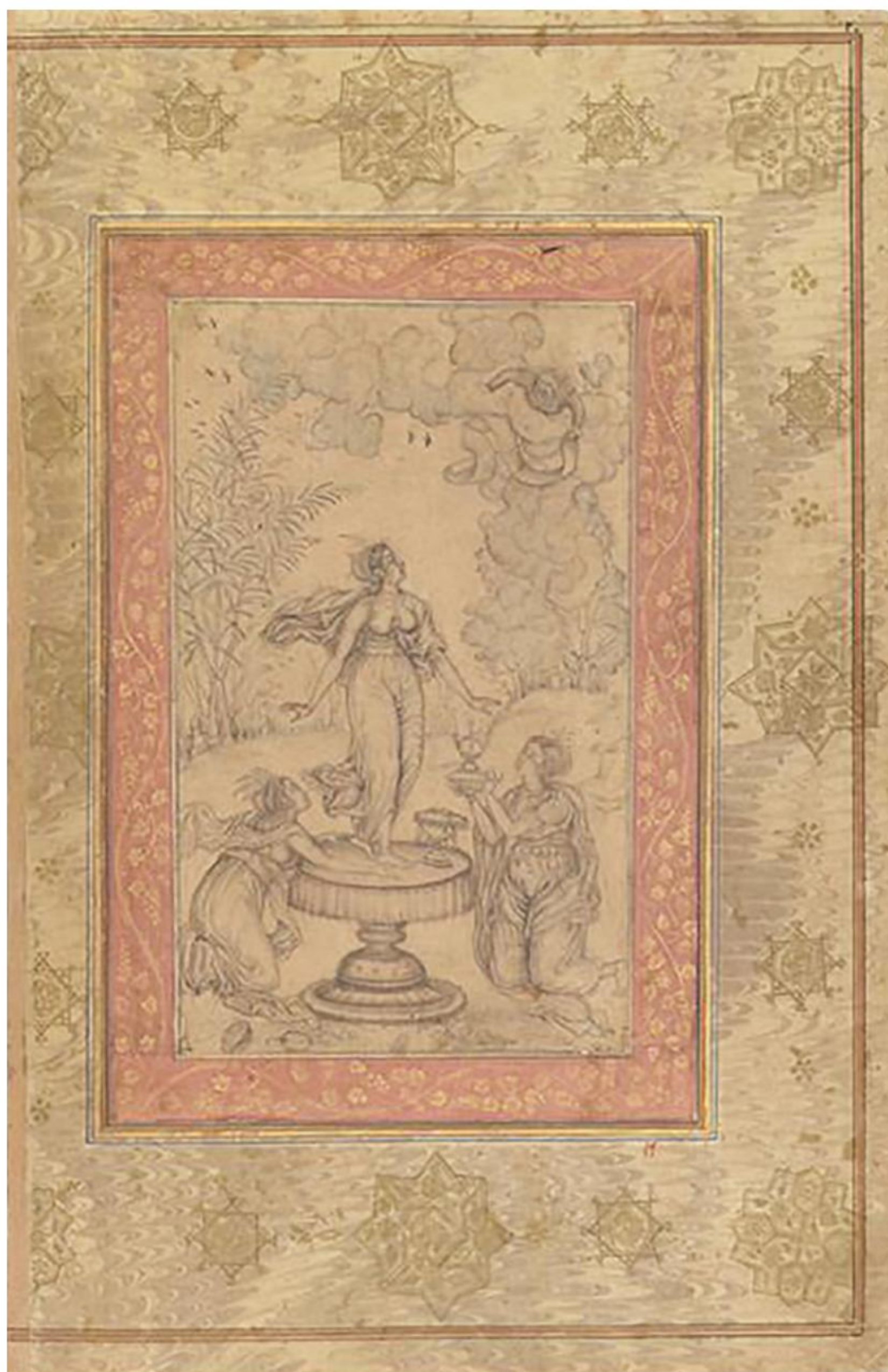


Fig. 3

Basawan (fl. 1580–1600),
*Woman standing on the head
of a monster*. India, Mughal,
17th century. 23.7 x 36 cm;
gouache on paper. Paris, Musée
Guimet, inv. OA 3619 G verso



the woman in our drawing, the *Pietas Regia* figure holds an open book before her bared breasts and wears a loose, classicizing dress with puffed sleeves and a plumed headdress.

Basawan used the *Pietas Regia* figure as a source for a number of his mysterious depictions of female figures, including four drawings in the Musée Guimet, Paris, and one in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (see fig. 2; Okada 1991, figs. 9–11; Okada 1992, figs. 85, 89, 90; Pal 1993, no. 54). The costume and face of the figure in our drawing, with dimpled cheek, small, pursed mouth and long pointed nose is almost identical, though in reverse, to that of the drawing in the Musée Guimet of a woman standing on a monster's head (see fig. 3; see Okada 1991, no. 11; Okada 1992, fig. 90; also reproduced in Seyller 2011, fig. 9). The repetition of the facial figures in these two drawings offers up the tantalising possibility that the drawing is a portrait of a woman, possibly a royal member of Akbar's court, who is depicted by Basawan in the guise of a European allegorical figure.

Other print sources for this drawing include sixteenth-century European engravings of the Annunciation, where the Virgin is almost always depicted holding her place in the Bible as she receives the Archangel Gabriel in her rooms. In Hendrick Goltzius' widely circulated *Annunciation* of 1594 (fig. 4), the Virgin holds her place in the Bible with two fingers, the other hand raised to her chest. The hand gesture of the figure in our portrait, as she holds her place in the book in her lap with three spread fingers, suggests that Basawan was familiar with the iconography of the Annunciation from print sources. Yet, despite obvious references to the iconography of the Virgin in this portrait, the classicising, immodest dress of our figure relates her more closely to



Fig. 4

Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), *Annunciation*, 1594, The
Netherlands, 21.3 x 28.6 cm; engraving. New York, Metropolitan
Museum of Art, inv. 17.3.1649



European prints and engravings of Old Testament female figures and warrior saints. The style sported by our figure, with high belt and diaphanous chemise emphasising her visible breasts, short puffed and pleated sleeves, and elaborate plumed headdress, recall European prints of Judith and Lucretia, who are often depicted bare-breasted or partially nude, in similar, classicising styles (figs. 5). Other classicising depictions of female figures that would have been circulating in print form at the Mughal courts include the aforementioned image of the *Pietas Regia*, as well as series of the *Seven Liberal Arts* (see, for example, St Eufemia reading a book in the British Museum, London, inv. inv. 1871,0429.463). Series like Goltzius' *Christ, the Apostles and St. Paul with the Creed* of c. 1589, depicting pensive half-figure portraits of the Apostles with the Bible, may also have served as iconographic source material.

Many versions of European images were available to and adapted by Mughal artists, but none assimilated these exotic forms so successfully into their oeuvres as Basawan. Both the gold border and halo around our figure's head were added later, probably at the same time as a related miniature by Manohar (fl. c. 1582–1624) was remounted and laid down in the same manner (fig. 6). Manohar was the son of Basawan and an accomplished Mughal court painter in his own right. Now in the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge MA, Manohar's portrait of a Madonna was also removed from a larger work and repurposed in the format of an icon, with the addition of a gold border and halo. It is likely that the two portraits were re-mounted together, at which time they were also given devotional significance. The history of remounting further emphasises the composite nature of our image and its multiple points of reference, both at the time of its making and in the course of its later reception. A dynamic and enigmatic portrait of a beautiful female figure, this image adapts and assimilates European allegorical and devotional imagery for use in the realm of Mughal portraiture and imperial imagery.

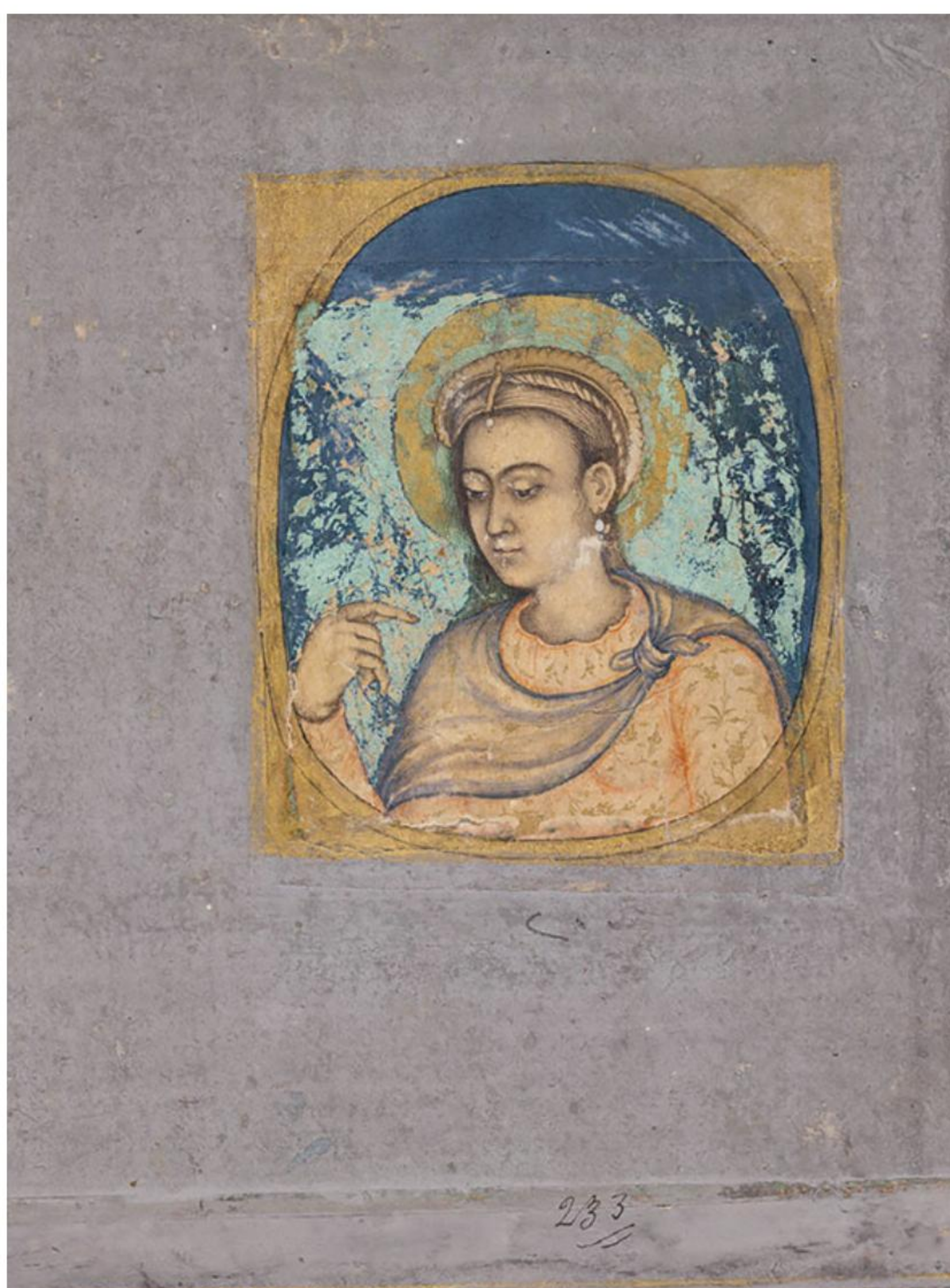


Fig. 5
Jan Sanraedam (c. 1565–1607) after Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), *Judith and the Head of Holofernes*, Netherlandish, c. 1575–1607. 28 x 20 cm; engraving. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 2012.136.604.

Fig. 6
Attributed to Manohar, (fl. 1580–1620), *Portrait of Madonna*. Mughal India, c. 1600. 12 x 9 cm; Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper. Cambridge MA, Harvard Art Museums, inv. 2009.202.78



2

Attributed to Tharapal (fl. 1585–95)

Folio from the first Baburnama made for the Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) with a full-page miniature of a battle between Khwaja Qazi and Aba-bikr at Uzgend in 1493–94

This magnificent leaf is from the first illustrated version of the *Baburnama* made for Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), who was keenly interested in painting, the life and legends of his ancestors, and the history of his own reign. The *Baburnama* contains the memoir of Babur (1483–1530), the founder of the Mughal empire and the paternal grandfather of Akbar. The lively memoir was written by Babur in Chaghatai Turkish shortly before his death in 1530 and was translated into Persian by Abd al-Rahim Khan Khanan at the behest of Akbar in 1589. The first manuscript of the *Baburnama* was produced and illustrated on a grand scale in Akbar's imperial workshop, where the great Mughal artists of the period were asked to contribute to the lavishly illustrated text. Many of the pages are signed by individual artists from the imperial atelier, and it is possible that around fifty artists worked on the manuscript together and that it was completed within a single year (see E.S. Smart, 1978). The manuscript, which was dispersed in 1913, originally contained 191 illustrations. A large group of at least nineteen leaves from the manuscript is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. IM.260-276.1913). A single leaf from the manuscript is held in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington (inv. F1945.27), while six are in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (inv. Ms. 6), one page is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 2013.576), and in the British Museum, London (fig. 1; inv. 1948,1009,0.71); others are held in private collections around the world.

This leaf depicts an epic battle scene, a real event from the early part of Babur's memoirs while he was still a youth in his home area of Farghana. At the time, local chiefs were struggling with one another for land and authority. The illustration represents the forces of Babur's ally, Khwaja Qazi, as well-equipped and superior, while those of Aba-bikr within the fort are meagre. The figure at top left, dressed in blue and loading a gun, is probably Aba-bikr. The central figure of the attacking cavalry must be Khwaja Qazi. The Persian number nine inscribed at the foot of the folio indicates the number of the illustration as it fell within the original volume. In most cases, the name of the artist was also inscribed in red in the lower margin of each leaf of the manuscript, although in this case the name of an artist is absent. The absence of an artist's name here may be ascribed to the unusually large measurement of the miniature, leaving minimal space for such an inscription. The inscriptions that survive on the leaves from this grand manuscript of the *Baburnama* indicate that many of the greatest artists of Akbar's atelier were employed in the manuscript's illustration.

The first *Baburnama*, from which this leaf originates, probably served as the model for the three other illustrated manuscripts of the same text made for Akbar during his reign. These later illustrated copies of the *Baburnama* include, in chronological order, a manuscript in the British Library, London (Ms OR.3714); a copy known only from its illustrations, divided between the State Museum of Eastern Cultures in Moscow and the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (inv. W.596); and a copy dated 1597–98 in the National Museum of India, New Delhi.

India, Mughal
c. 1589

24.9 x 13.5 cm (tinted drawing); 26.5 x 15.5 cm (sheet); Opaque watercolour on paper with gold pigment manuscript leaf on paper, recto with full-page miniature in colours and gold with margin rules, numbered 9 at bottom. Verso with a page of 13 lines in Persian text in nasta'liq within margin rules in gold and colours.

Provenance

Luzac and co. London, 1913
Collection of Hagop Kevorkian, before 1975
Sold at Sotheby's, London, 7 April 1975, lot 97
Private Collection, UK, until 2018

This painting can be attributed to Tharapal (sometimes written in Persian as Tarapal and transliterated as Thripal or Tirpal), a previously unstudied artist known from seven ascribed paintings in four other imperial manuscripts produced from the mid 1580s to the mid 1590s. Two works appear in the 1584–86 Jaipur Razmnama (A.G. 1836, 1845), two each in the British Library *Baburnama* and the 1596 Chingiznama in the Gulistan Library, Tehran, and one in the 'Iyar -i Danish in the Chester Beatty Library (Ms. 4, no. 68). In two cases, Tharapal's work was enhanced by corrections or portraits supplied by Sanvala.

Full report on the attribution provided by John Seyller available upon request.

3

Attributed to Payag (active c. 1591–1658) Two holy men conversing in a landscape

This tinted drawing depicting two holy men in a landscape is attributed to the artist Payag (active c. 1591–1658), a painter at the imperial Mughal court who had an impressive, seventy-year career under the subsequent reigns of Mughal emperors Akbar (r. 1556–1605), Jahangir (r. 1605–27) and Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58). Payag was the brother of Balchand (fl. 1595–1650), another accomplished painter at the Mughal court with whom he collaborated in a few documented instances. He is known for his naturalistic landscapes, considered compositions, and psychological portraits. Payag is also celebrated for his close study and adaptation of seventeenth-century European hunting scenes and landscapes. In the 1640–50s, he composed a number of important imperial hunting scenes, including a painting of Dara-Shikoh hunting nilgai (fig. 1) and one of Shah Shuja hunting nilgai, both with landscapes inspired by Dutch and Flemish engravings. In this period of production

India, Mughal
c. 1640–50

8.7 x 5.9 cm (tinted drawing); 25.8 x 20.1 cm (sheet); Gouache heightened with gold on paper, multiple narrow borders with gilt floral and foliate motifs, the inner border with Persian verses in black nasta'liq script on reserved ground in illuminated panels, the outer border with later Persian inscription 'amal Dalchand wa Fateh Chand musavvir', with buff margins, lower margin with French inscription in pencil, the reverse with a rubbed inscription in brown ink, further bearing 'de la Collection Boilly' in pencil below.

Provenance

Inscribed on the reverse, 'de la Collection Boilly'

Piasa Paris, 7 May 2011

Private collection, USA



Fig. 1
Attributed to Payag (fl. c. 1591–c. 1658), *Dara Shikoh Hunting Nilgai*. Mughal India, c. 1640. 17.2 x 23.6 cm; Opaque watercolour and gold on paper. Washington DC, National Museum of Asian Art, inv. S1993.42a–c

اگر چه اصلاح دنیا چون موی سر کند برای آنست که آرا و سیله راه
عقبی سازد و لیکن اگر داشت ای شتغال بوسیله دیگر مقصود



کردن آنرا اصلاح و از مدامس و کوشش است زنی آن را می یابد که اصلاح و نفاذ

اما بعد خیره حال زندگانی را را افشا ده و ده است که بر کسی که را عیسو و کوشش

بسیار نهند پیم آنست که مقصود را فراموش و سیله را
بجای مقصود و فراموشی که و سیله و دست مقصود

اگر چه اصلاح دنیا چون ممکن نیست برای آنست که آرا و سبیل را
عقبی سازد و لیکن اگر در اثباتش اشتغال بوسیله دیگر مقصود



کردن آنرا اصلاح دانند و آنرا بهر کوشش است از بی یاری که به اصلاح باشد

اما بعد تجربه حال مذکور را مشاهده و دانستن که هرگز از عیب و کوشش

بسیار نیکو نیست که مقصود را فراموش و سبیل را
بجای مقصود و اگر در خصوص طبع که وسیله و مقصود

عمل در آل چند و فتح چند تصور

*Safis ou saints persons punis par les malins
Safis ou saints persons punis par les malins*

from the middle of the seventeenth century, Payag adapted landscape models from European sources to illustrate Indian scenery and forms within the Mughal pictorial idiom (see E. Koch, 1998, figs. 5–6; no. 19).

This tinted brush drawing was probably made c. 1640, during the reign of Shah Jahan, when Payag was a mature figure and the leading artist in the emperor's atelier. At this time, the artist's attention turned towards depictions of holy men and mystical, nocturnal scenes. In this dusky, near-nocturnal image, two holy men stand in a landscape, identifiable by their turbans, long beards, bare feet, minimal clothing, and mystical accoutrements. The hand gesture of the figure on the right indicates that the two men are in conversation. They stand on a patch of lush green grass, while a large tamarind tree branches off in two directions behind them against a dusky, pink and golden sky. The twisting, naturalistic tree and its placement within the landscape recalls the verdant background of the painting of Dara-Shikoh hunting, as well as the Europeanising landscapes from which Payag drew inspiration. The streaky, golden sky is typical of Payag's night scenes from the period and recalls the sky in a painting of 'Soldiers Listening to Music beneath a Mango Tree', from the Late Shah Jahan Album, now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (fig. 2). The sombre expressions, wrinkled faces, and slim, long noses of the figures recall Payag's depictions of other mystical men, such as those in a drawing of two figures now in the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge MA (fig. 3). Other night scenes depicting gatherings of holy men include a painting ascribed to Payag, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (inv. 13031; see J.M. Dye, 1991, pp. 130–31, fig. 11–13).



Fig. 2
Attributed to Payag (fl. c. 1591–1658), *Soldiers Listening to Music beneath a Mango Tree*, from the Late Shah Jahan Album. India, Mughal, c. 1640. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Inv. In 07B.20.



Fig. 3
Attributed to Payag, Indian (fl. mid-17th century), Fath 'Ali Shah and Miran Shah, *Two Holy Men*. India, Mughal period, c. 1635–40. 15 x 18.5 cm; grey-black ink on paper. Cambridge MA, Harvard Art Museums, inv. 2009.202.211



4

Attributed to Govardhan (fl. 1596–1645)

Prince Murad Bakhsh and his beloved in the guise of Adam and Eve

An amorous, youthful royal pair, standing nude and entangled in an intimate embrace in a palace interior, command our attention in this astonishing drawing by the great Mughal master Govardhan (fl. 1596–1645). The erotic composition, which depicts Prince Murad Bakhsh (1624–61) and his wife Sakina Banu Begum in a precarious erotic dance, just teetering towards consummation, is one of the most fascinating Mughal images to appear in decades. The dearth of erotic images in Mughal painting makes this painting anomalous, though it has been established that its iconography is based on a 1598 engraving of *Adam and Eve*, in which the ‘original couple’ of the Christian world is rendered in a near-identical pose by the Dutch engraver Bartolomeus Willemsz Dolendo (1571–1626) after two paintings of the *Fall of Paradise* by Bartholomeus Spranger (1546–1611) (fig. 2; see C. Metzler, 2014, cat. 62, 201; p. 135, 315) (fig. 1). A version of Spranger’s *Adam and Eve* also appears in the background of a contemporary painting by Pieter de Hooch of c. 1666, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 2). Govardhan, the artist responsible for this inventive and sophisticated adaptation of a northern European print model, was the foremost master at the imperial atelier of the Mughal emperors Jahangir (r. 1605–27) and Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58). Govardhan was known for adapting European prints in his compositions, as he exhibits in this fluid assimilation of the Christian iconography of ‘Adam and Eve’ to represent the consummation of a Mughal imperial marriage.

Although he has transposed the couple into a Mughal palace setting, Govardhan’s formal dependence upon the European model is apparent in his volumetric treatment of the two figures in the drawing. The figures of Murad Bakhsh and his lover stand in the improbable, full-frontal pose established by Spranger. The prince’s right foot is the only limb firmly planted on the ground, while the left leg is linked under his lover’s right thigh, lifting it off the ground and pulling her towards him. There is a tenderness to the couple’s embrace, as he wraps his arms around her waist and lifts her off the ground, leaving her in a tip-toe stance with all of her weight loaded on the ball of her left foot. Govardhan has clearly understood and assimilated Spranger’s erotic language, with its precarious poses, spring-loaded bodies, and interlinking limbs, into this intimate drawing of a Mughal imperial couple (see C. Metzler, 2014, cats. 135, 137, 140; pp. 224–25, 228–33).

While the artist carefully follows his model to depict the pose and bodies of his two figures, other elements have been adapted to the Mughal setting. Unlike the European original, the faces of the figures are portrait-like and rendered in soft, modelled detail. Govardhan also replaces the thick hair of the Eve figure with a long diaphanous *odhani*, or veil, which cascades down her left side and traces the contours of her figure. The female figure’s upraised right arm lifts a corner of her transparent veil behind her paramour’s turbaned head, enfolding him within their embrace and eliminating the Christian conceit of reaching for the apple from the

India, Mughal
c. 1640

16.2 x 12.7 cm (sheet); Album leaf, brush drawing in pigments, black ink, and gold on wasli paper, laid down on a secondary card support, ornamented with red and blue rules and gold floral motifs. In excellent condition

Provenance

Presumably commissioned by Prince Murad Bakhsh (1624–61), son of Shah Jahan
Collection of art historians Walter and Nesta Spink, Ann Arbor MI, by 1986



Fig. 1

Zacharias Dolendo (1561–1600), after Bartholomeus Spranger (1546–1611), *Adam and Eve*, c. 1580–1601. The Netherlands, The Hague. 17.3 x 11.4 cm; engraving. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-BI-7103

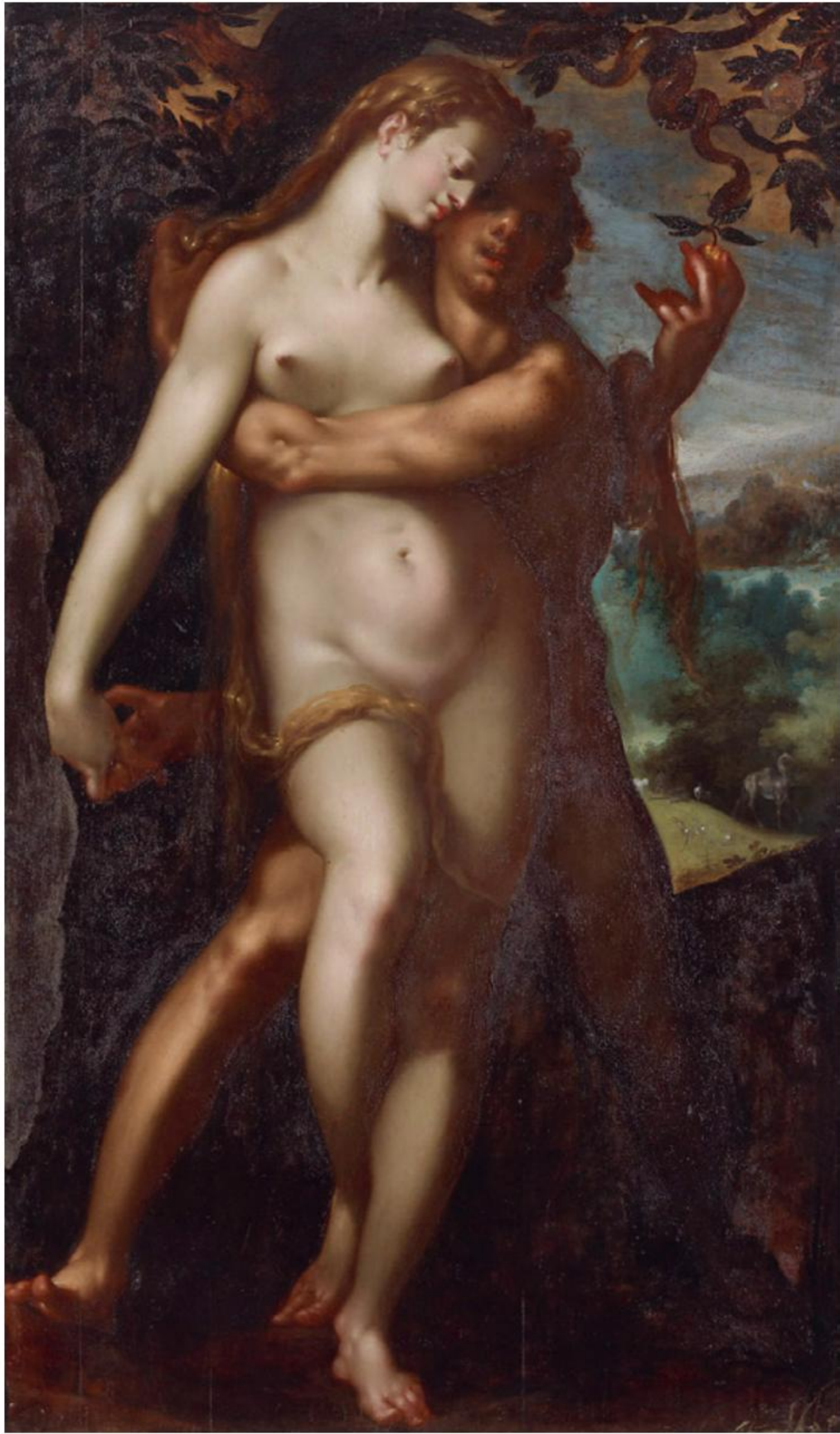


Fig. 2
Bartholomeus Spranger (1546–1611), *Adam and Eve*. The Netherlands, c. 1593–95. 126 x 79 cm; oil on panel. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. RP-P-OB-10.209



Fig. 3
Pieter de Hooch (c. 1629–84), *Leisure Time in an Elegant Setting*. c. 1663–65. 58.3 x 69.4 cm; Oil on canvas. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1975.1.44

Tree of Life. He transforms the phallus from a proportionately small and flaccid organ, as it commonly appears in European art, to a prominent and erect one, as is customary in the occasional sexualised scene in Indian painting. He simplifies the anatomical articulation of the figures' knees and elbows and adds modest jewellery to the female figure's arm and wrists. The painter shifts the setting too, from a burgeoning Garden of Eden to a three-dimensional pavilion interior decorated with shallow ornamental niches, a pair of rolled-up blinds, and a bed with a wine bottle and cup at its side. While Mughal in character, these details further recall the European iconography of the Annunciation, in which a bed and other accoutrements often appear in the background.



Fig. 4
Detail. Murar (fl. 1656–57), *The Wedding procession of Prince Dara-Shukoh* (12 February 1633), fol 122b, with Murad Bakhsh at centre left below Shah Shuja'. From the *Padshahnama* of Shah Jahan. c. 1635. 58.3 x 36.9 cm (leaf); Opaque watercolour and metallic pigments on paper. Windsor, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 1005025

The drawing is a fluid transposition of European religious iconography into the portrait-scene of an imperial Mughal consummation, where the royal couple take up the pose of the 'original couple', or the first man and woman of the Chistian world. The youthfulness of the male figure, evidenced by his nascent moustache, suggests that he is a young Mughal prince. The figure is Prince Murad Bakhsh (9 October 1624 – 14 December 1661), the son of Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58) and younger brother of Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707). This identification is supported by the prince's likenesses in two *Padshahnama* illustrations of c. 1635 (fig. 4–5; see fols. 72b and 122b in Beach, Koch, and Thackston, *King of the World*, London, 1997, pls. 14 and 23). Other independent portraits of Murad Bakhsh, notably one in the British Museum (figs. 4–5; 1920,0917, 0.287, published in R. Pinder-Wilson, *Paintings from the Muslim Courts of India*, London, 1976, no. 142), and another by Anup Chattar of c. 1650–60 (fig. 5; see also Sotheby's, London, 1 July 1969, lot 114), are also consistent with this figure in the profile of the nose, the large size and distinctive slant of the eye, and the high-arching shape of the eyebrow.

This Mughal 'Adam and Eve' was not Govardhan's only venture into the realm of erotic art, nor does it represent his only use of a European print as a model for a drawing. In the drawing of a male religious novice in *Ascetics* of c. 1630–35, Govardhan draws on the figure of a back-turned nude in the foreground of the *Penance of St Chrystostom* in a c. 1541–45 print by the German artists Barthel and Hans Beham. A tiny and accomplished drawing of the same prince that appears in our drawing engaged in intercourse has also been attributed to Govardhan. The coincidence of these two extraordinary drawings suggests the leading Mughal artist of the day was commissioned by Prince Murad Bakhsh to draw this intimate portrait following his marriage in 1638.



5

Radha tells her friend she is trying to free herself from her infatuation with Krishna

Folio from the preparatory series of drawings for the ‘Second Guler’ or ‘Tehri-Garhwal’ Gita Govinda (Song of the Cowherd)

This preparatory drawing by an accomplished Guler artist is a study for an illustration in the important ‘Second Guler’ Gita Govinda series, one of the absolute high points of Indian painting. Composed in the late twelfth century by the eastern Indian poet Jayadeva (fl. c. 1150–1200) and organised into twelve cantos or chapters, the Gita Govinda (‘Song of the Herdsman’) evokes the joys and tribulations of the all-consuming love of Krishna and the *gopi*, or village maiden Radha. There is a minimal sense of narrative development throughout the text, which instead takes the form of discrete introspective musings by both Krishna and Radha. These musings focus on their feelings at various moments of the romance as well as some rapturous expressions directed by the two lovers towards one other. In this drawing, Radha confides in a friend about her love affair with Krishna. A related scene of Radha and a confidant from the finished ‘Tehri Garhwal’ Gita Govinda in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, illustrates a similar moment in the narrative (fig. 1). A large group of drawings from the same series are in the Museum Rietberg, Zurich (see C. Widmer, 2019).

The dispersed series of paintings to which this study belongs is known in academic circles as the ‘Second Guler’ or ‘Tehri-Garhwal’ Gita Govinda. The former appellation acknowledges the prior Gita Govinda series made in Guler in 1730, while the latter refers to the series’ ownership by the royal family of Tehri-Garhwal, a state in the Punjab Hills. The series is estimated to number 151 paintings, a calculation based on the numeral 151 appearing on what is ostensibly the last work in the series. Approximately 140 paintings have survived. The series has long been thought to date to c. 1775 or even as late as 1780, in part because of an assumed connection to the marriage of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra in 1781.

J.P. Losty advanced a persuasive argument for the slightly earlier date of c. 1765–70 to account for the clear contributions of the great Guler master painter Nainsukh (c. 1710–78) to the preparatory drawings, such as ours. There is no doubt that Nainsukh’s personal handiwork is manifest in the designs of these evocative visualisations of the verses, and scholars generally agree that several members of his immediate family – one or more of his own four sons, or the two sons of his elder brother, Manaku, collectively known as the ‘First Generation after Nainsukh and Manaku’ – were responsible for the paintings that followed in the 1770s. This successive generation followed the technical process exemplified in earlier drawings like this one, with an initial under-drawing made with a thick brush in reddish sanguine, after which a thin base layer of white or pale-yellow paint was applied to prepare the surface for the application of a fine line drawing. The line drawing typically follows the composition closely but not always exactly (see Losty 2017, pp. 146–63).

India, Guler
c. 1765–70

9.3 x 28 cm (sheet); Brush drawing in red sanguine and black with white primer, inscribed on the reverse in Devanagari with the Sanskrit text of Jayadeva’s *Gita Govinda*, Canto VII, v. 30, and a Pahari paraphrase, numbered 101 on recto and on verso 101 and also 97.

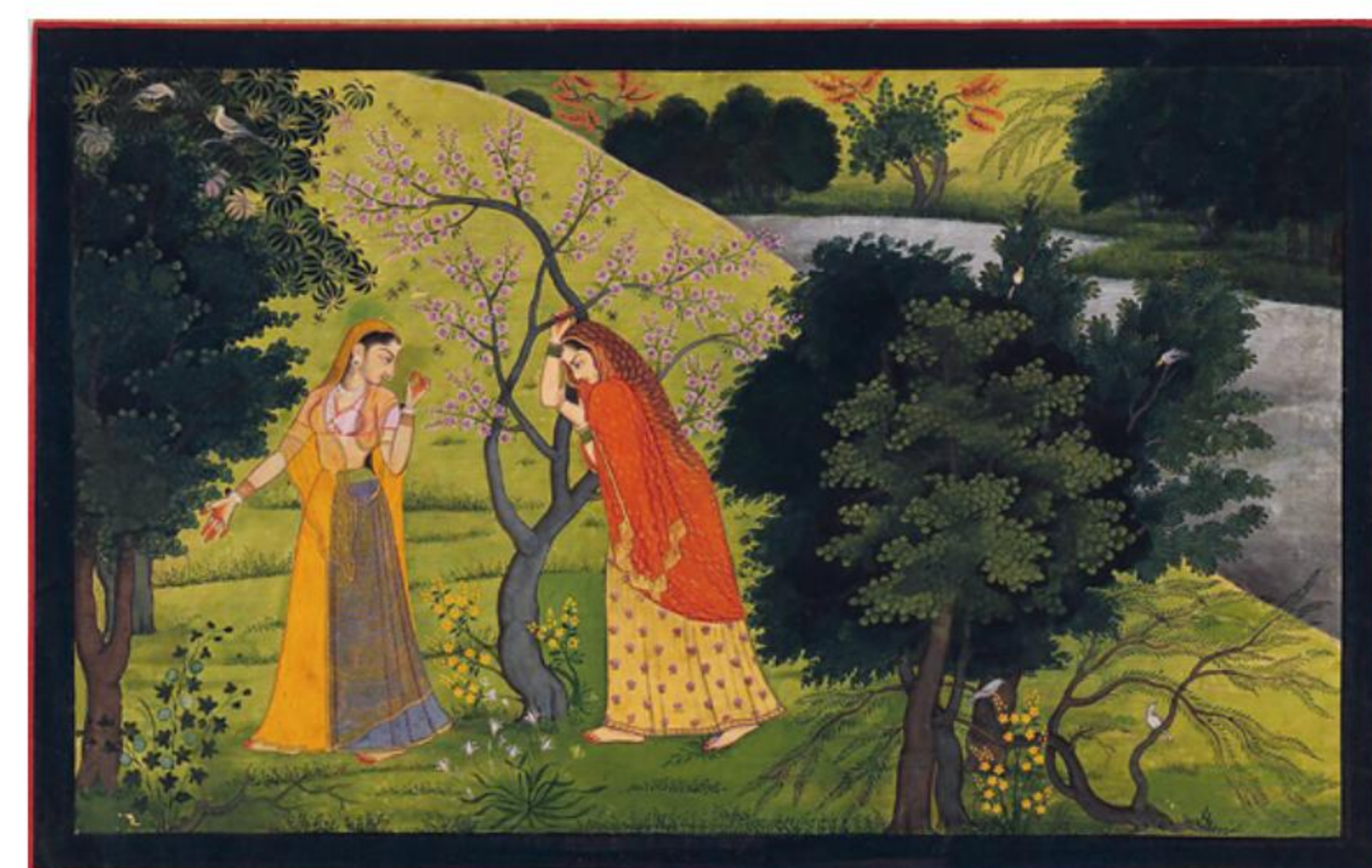
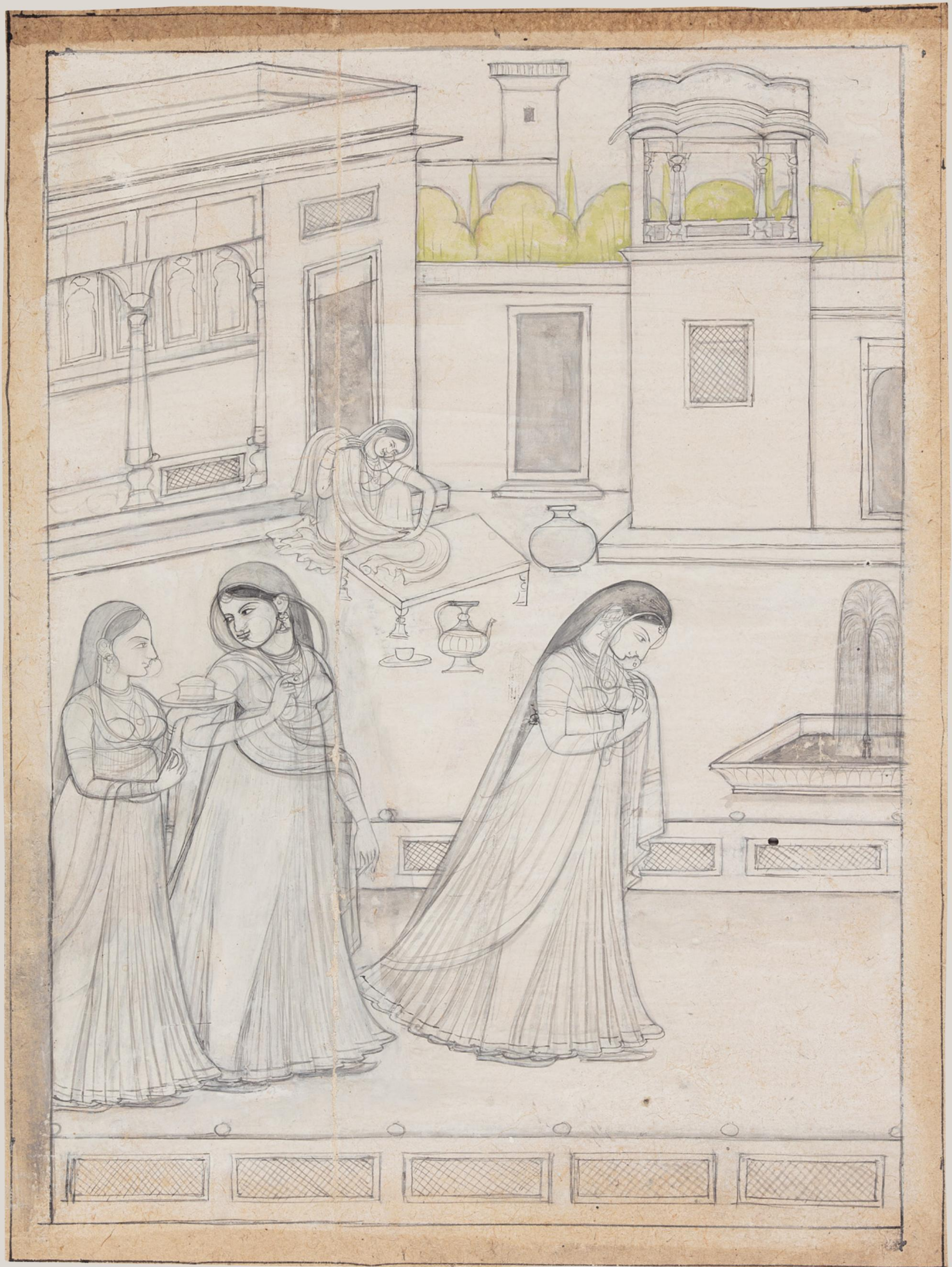


Fig. 1
Radha with Her Confidant, Pining for Krishna. Folio from the ‘Second’ or ‘Tehri Garhwal’ Gita Govinda (Song of the Cowherd). India, c. 1776–80. 17.5 x 27 cm; Opaque watercolour and gold on paper. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 2020.383

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6

Artist of the first generation after Nainsukh (1710–78) A lovelorn lady

This drawing is an exquisitely drawn preparatory sketch for a text on courtly love. Three women stroll in the foreground of a palace courtyard. Two are in conversation with each other about the third, who walks ahead, her head bowed pensively as she dreams of her absent lover. In the background a fourth woman unfurls a long shawl onto a table. On the grounds of subject matter, it would be tempting to attribute this drawing to a *Rasikapriya* series, ‘The Cultivated Lover’ of Keshava Dasa, which was completed in 1591 and deals with the classification of eight heroes (*nayakas*) and heroines (*nayikas*), their mutual fascination, attachments, separations and reunions. However, no Kangra version of the *Rasikapriya* survives before the oval format series of about 1810–20 (see W.G. Archer, 1956, no. 66).

This drawing must belong to an earlier stage of the Kangra tradition. The two figures on the left compare very closely to two female figures carrying water pots in another drawing by a master of the first generation after Nainsukh (see Goswamy and Fischer, 1992, no. 139). The girl with her face in three-quarter view may be compared with three girls in a similar, contemporary scene in a small painting of the ‘Toilette of the Beloved’ (ibid., no. 149). It is of particular interest as it clearly demonstrates the artist’s technique of building up the sketch in a series of circular strokes. The roundness of the young women’s forms is emphasised by the curve of their wimples, large hoop earrings, rounded cheeks, breasts and flowing drapery.

**India, Kangra or Guler
c. 1785–90**

21.2 x 16 cm (sheet); Brush drawing in black ink heightened with grey wash, white gypsum and touches of colour, reverse with 6-line inscription in nagari script in red ink of two Hindi verses.

Provenance

Terence McNerney, 1997

Published

Dehejia, H.V., *Rasikapriya*, Delhi, 2013, p. 278

7

A lonely heroine observes the birds courting in a tree Page from a poetic text in Hindi

The heroine depicted in this elegant, black line drawing is the same female figure drawn by Nainsukh's sons and nephews for the three great Vaishnava manuscripts of the 1770s (see Goswamy and Fischer, 1992, nos. 130–45). The oval format of this drawing is the first known in Guler to originate from the same atelier as the Bihari Satsai series of c. 1775 (see Losty, 2017, no. 76), although the verse on the reverse is not from that text. Here, the heroine is seated on a throne-chair, one of her arms resting on her raised knee, while she raises the other to her chin. She is shown in a pensive pose, as she gazes outward and muses upon the behaviour of the courting black birds in the barren tree just outside her balcony. The tree upon which the birds rest is barren, although the greenery surrounding the scene appears to be in full bloom, perhaps indicating the conflicted inner state of the woman in the scene. Our heroine is rendered in a typical pose indicating that she is longing for an absent beloved, her lonely state contrasted with the springtime activities of the birds. She is beautifully and carefully drawn, the curves of her body drawn with long, sure lines. Her face is depicted in fine detail, in particular her long, curving forehead, the individual strands of hair falling from her central parting, her short nose, and firm, rounded chin. While it is elongated, her eye is not as extended as her arched eyebrow above. In the background, the courtyard of her house and the trees and village houses beyond the garden wall are drawn in black ink and tinted in gouache tones of green, pale pink and brown.

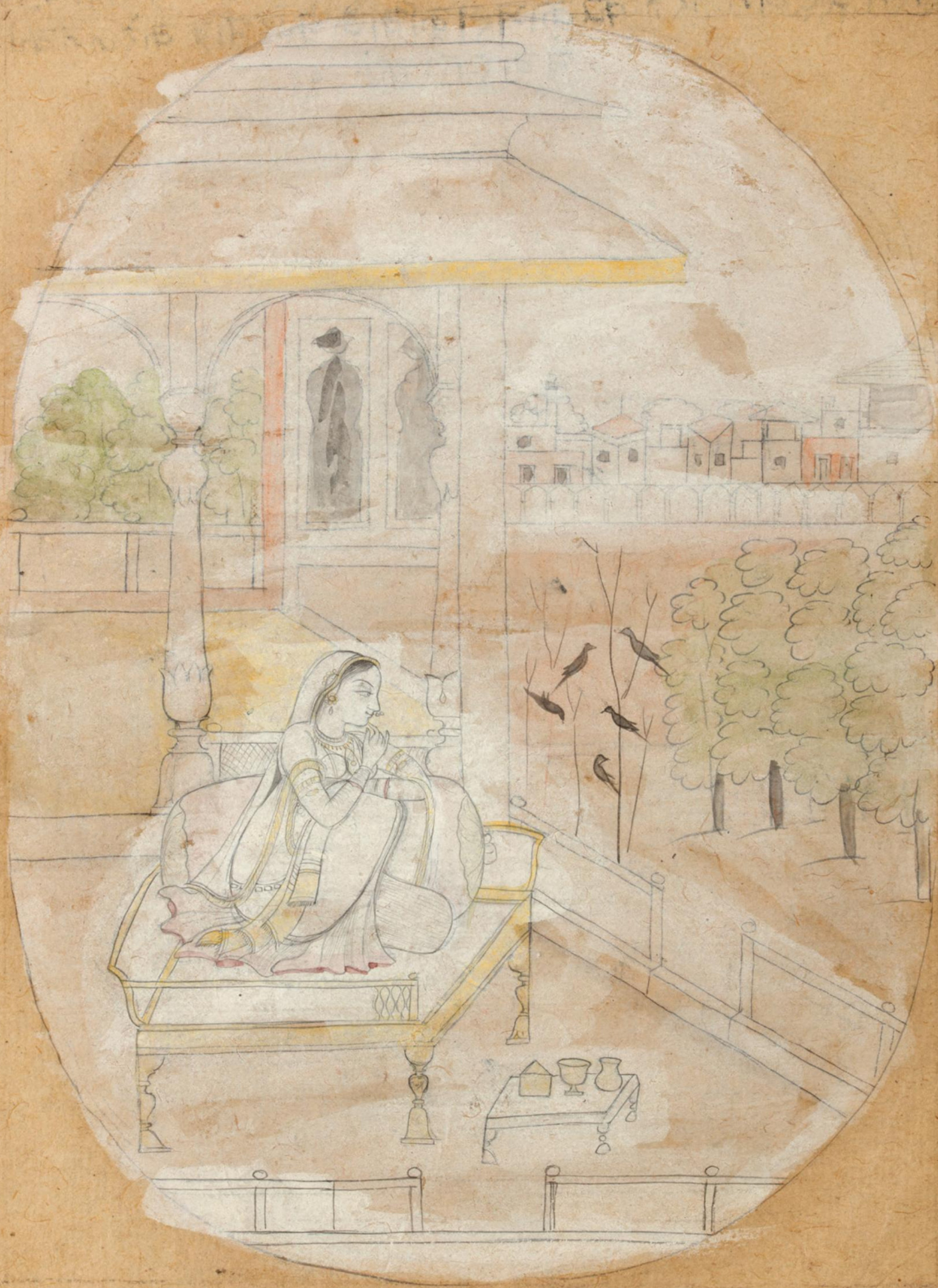
India, Guler
c. 1770–80

28.5 x 21.4 cm (sheet); Black line drawing in oval format, with some gouache washes on a white primed ground, inscribed with a damaged poetic text in Hindi in nagari on the reverse.

Provenance
Bonham's, London, 2011
Sven Gahlin Collection

The reverse of the page is inscribed with a damaged poetic text in Hindi in nagari script ending:

komala kuki kaigheri paku kare janaki . cai karti kyon / on the soft sounds made by the cuckoo





8

A sheet of animal sketches

A Kotah artist used this sheet for some remarkably vigorous, naturalistic sketches of animals in movement. A springing lioness has brought down a terrified black buck, while another buck below flees as it looks back at its young. Below, a crow is attacking the eyes of a dead buck as a deer springs away from the scene of slaughter. The idea of a natural landscape, with patches of turf, hillocks, and bushy trees rendered in red, appear across the middle-ground of the sheet. Sketches of a man's head and a horseman, possibly wielding a hunting weapon, complete the contents of the sheet. Taken together, the contents of the sheet suggest that its artist was musing over and preparing for a larger composition featuring a scene of the hunt. The springing lioness and her prey are the most finished drawings of the sheet, parts of which are rendered in thick black outline. The details of the predator's face, mane, furry tail and hind legs are drawn in with quick naturalistic strokes of black pigment, while white paint is used as a highlight and red pigment is used to depict the blood of the lioness' prey.

For a pair of related Kotah drawings with naturalistic fish, birds and dragons, now in the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge MA (fig. 1) see Welch, S.C., and Masteller, K., *From Mind, Heart and Hand: Persian, Turkish and Indian Drawings from the Stuart Cary Welch Collection*, New Haven, 2004, nos. 40–41, 51. Like the vigorous sketches by the Kotah Master, this sheet of composite drawings may have been used to prepare mural paintings in the Kotah palace of the Rajput Kingdom of Bundi in Rajasthan. The palace murals contain myriad, imaginative animal figures, which populate the historical and mythological scenes of the painted walls and ceilings.

India, Rajasthan, Kotah
c. 1700–25

14.1 x 17.1 cm (sheet); Brush drawing in black and red pigments on paper.



Fig. 1
Attributed to the Kotah Master, *Dragons and Geese, Fish and a Turtle*. India, Rajasthan, Kota, c. 1700. 4.6 x 18.7 cm; 3.6 x 13.7 cm; black ink and white watercolour on paper. Cambridge MA, Harvard Art Museums, inv. 2009.202.123-1.2

9

Portrait of a baby male elephant

The characterful way the elephant depicted in this drawing wraps its trunk into a tight curl suggests that it is amused. Drawings of elephants, out hunting or taking part in games and processions, were popular in the small *thikanas* of Sawar and Isarda, near to Ajmer in the centre of Rajasthan (see Pasricha, 1982; Falk and Lynch, 1987). Artists delighted in drawing the leathery and wrinkled surface of elephant skin. Here, the artist has contented himself with a shaded outline of the elephant's body, depicted in profile with the front right leg lifted to indicate that he is processing in a forward direction. Meanwhile, the artist has worked up the head and trunk of the animal in more detail, emphasising the deep-set, yellow eye of the animal as well as the recesses around the ear and the curve of the trunk. The absence of tusks would indicate that the elephant is still a baby. The circle above its eyes is the area where the *mada* gland develops, which exudes the *mast* of the bull elephants in rut. This part of the elephant was often depicted decorated. For a very similar depiction of a fully-grown bull elephant, see Falk and Lynch, 1987, p.10, no. 7.

India, Isarda

c. 1750

32.5 x 45 cm (sheet); Brush drawing in black pigment on paper.





10

A nobleman seated in a Regency-style chair

This portrait of an Indian nobleman, seated in Regency-style chair and accompanied by an armed attendant, was drawn by a Bikaner-school artist in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The drawing was probably a preparatory sheet for a court portrait of the seated nobleman, a ruler at one of the late Rajput courts in Rajasthan. The figure of the nobleman, along with the Regency-style chair in which he sits, and his attendant, are rendered in strong black outlines. The face and turban of the nobleman are highly detailed, emphasising his long, slanting nose, pursed lips, and heavily shaded beard. He wears a long robe with trousers underneath, with a pistol tucked into his waist sash. His turban is tied in place and fitted low around his strong brow in a distinctive fashion. He holds a longsword and a bell in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. The somewhat inelastic style of the line drawing recalls a related drawing of an artist in the National Museum, New Delhi (fig. 1).

A partially erased sketch of the raised left hand of the seated figure provides insight into the artist's compositional process, the raised hand in the erased sketch perhaps indicating that the figure is calling for an attendant. The final drawing, however, depicts the central figure with both hands at rest on the arms of the Regency-style chair, giving him an overall sedate impression that matches the sombre look on his face. His attendant, perhaps a younger member of the same noble family, is shown standing behind the central figure and holds a matchlock rifle in one hand and a flyswatter in the other. The youthful companion has almost identical, albeit more youthful, facial features, and is dressed in similar garb. Two small dogs scamper around the feet of the two figures, and a low table with food and drink is drawn in lightly between them. The scene is depicted within a loosely rendered, enclosed garden, the sense of a landscape provided by the sketch of a low, fenced enclosure in the background and the rounded bushes and fronds beyond.

India, Rajasthan, Bikaner School
c. 1811–1820

26.7 x 19 cm (sheet); Brush drawing in black ink on paper.

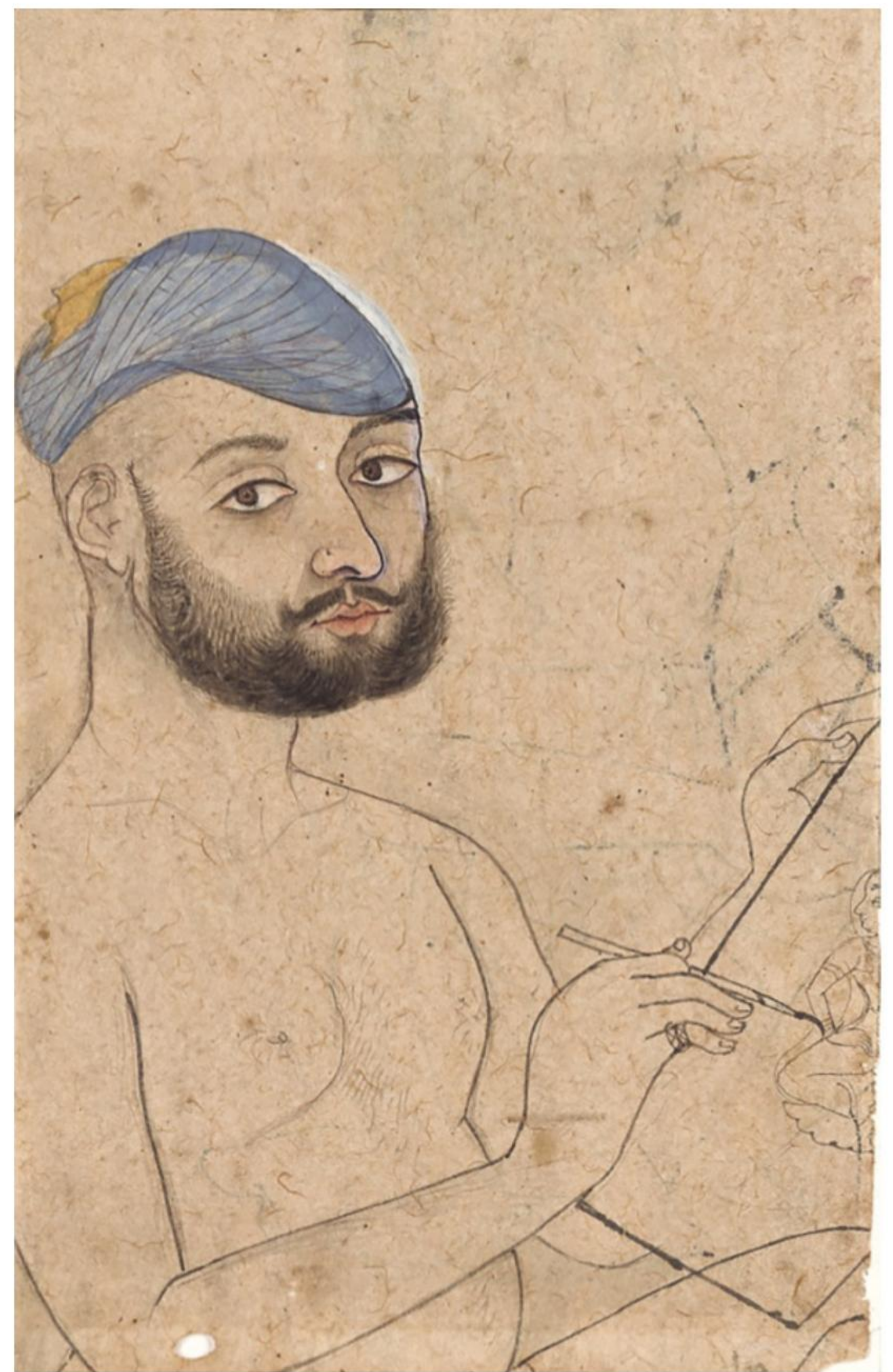


Fig. 1

Artist making a portrait of a damsel. India, Bikaner, Rajasthan,
c. 1780–90. 26.7 x 13.6 cm; ink and pigments on paper.
National Museum, New Delhi, inv. 47.110/923

11

A simurgh chick

A fantastical simurgh chick depicted with a sharp, curving beak emits flames from its blazing eyes and sharp claws in this refined drawing probably made in Tabriz or Baghdad at the end of the Ilkhanid period (r. 1256–1353) or the first half of the successive Jalayirid Sultanate (r. 1335–1432). A fully rendered sketch, finished with a brownish-red wash of colour tinting the bird's plumage, this fantastical yet naturalistic drawing may have been an elaborate preparatory study for a larger composition illustrating a mythological scene in a bestiary or epic manuscript. The accomplished study, however, is a finished drawing in its own right and was once considered significant and beautiful enough to preserve in an album at a later date. The simurgh is usually depicted with a sharp beak and claws with three talons, eagle-like feathers, and long, multi-coloured flaming tail feathers. In this example, the reddish-brown tinted wings of the bird are folded back against its body. A nubby appendage protruding from its side suggests that it will grow additional plumage. The soft, downy plumage of the chest, underbelly and long tail feathers are rendered in swift thin brushstrokes of black pigment. The heavy black line used to render the sharp claws and single large, circular eye with black pupil lends it a menacing aura and infuses the creature with energetic potential.

Drawings of birds and fantastical beasts abound in Ilkhanid and Jalayirid manuscript illustration and line drawings of the fourteenth century. Images of birds and fantastical beasts, including simurghs, filled the earliest manuscripts produced under Ilkhanid patronage at Maragha, as in the late thirteenth century copy of the *Manafi' al-Hayawan* or *The Benefits of Animals*, composed by Abu Said Ubaid-Allah ibn Jibrail ibn Bakhtishu (c. 980–1058). Now dispersed, eighty-six folios from the manuscript are held in the Morgan Library & Museum, New York (see R. Hillenbrand, 2012, figs. 10, 31–34, 37–42, pp. 178, 273–76, 279–84). A single folio from the same manuscript in the Cleveland Museum of Art with a tinted black line drawing of a pair of quail offers a close stylistic and technical comparison to our drawing (fig. 1). A magnificent drawing of 'Jonah and the Whale' from a manuscript of the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* of Rashid al-Din (1247–1318) produced in Ilkhanid Tabriz offers additional comparanda for the vigorous depictions of fabulous beasts by Mongol draughtsmen in the first half of the fourteenth century (fig. 2).

The mythical, female simurgh appears in Persian epic and mystical texts, including in an episode in the *Shahnama* or *Book of Kings* of Abu'l Qasim Firdausi (composed c. 1010) in which she rescues Prince Zal and takes him back to her nest. There, she becomes Zal's guardian and nurtures him in her nest alongside her chicks. One of four folios from a dispersed Jalayirid *Shahnama* made in Tabriz in c. 1370 and attributed to the master artist Shams al-Din illustrates a fabulously coloured adult simurgh taking Zal back to its nest on Mount Demavend (fig. 3; see J.M. Rogers, 1986, p. 71, nos. 50–53; B. O'Kane, 2017, fig. 17.12, pp. 482–83). Like the simurgh

Ilkhanid Tabriz or Jalayirid Baghdad
c. 1350–1400

14 x 8.5 cm (drawing); Black ink and brown pigments on paper, within red and gold rules, cropped and paper within floral borders.



Fig. 1

Detail, Folio from a Persian *Manafi' al-Hayawan* (The Benefits of Animals) of Abu Said Ubaid-Allah ibn Jibrail ibn Bakhtishu (d. 1058–68). Iran, Maragah, Ilkhanid period (1256–1353). 24.7 x 18.2 cm; opaque watercolour, ink, and gold on paper. Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. 1945.382



Fig. 2

The simurgh returns Zal to his father Sam, from an illustrated copy of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi. Iran, Isfahan. Dated Friday, 27 Rabi' al-awwal, 1011 (14 September 1602). 30.5 x 20.6 cm; opaque pigments and gold on paper. London, Khalili Collections, inv. MSS 544, fol. 30b





Fig. 3
The Simurgh taking Zal back to its nest on Mount Demavend, possibly attributed to Shams al-Din, from a dispersed *Shahnama*. Tabriz, c. 1370. 31.5 x 19 cm; opaque pigments on paper. Istanbul, Topkapi Saray Library and Museum, Album H.2153, fol. 23a



Fig. 4
Celestial Vision. Baghdad or Tabriz, c. 1375–1400. Istanbul, Topkapi Saray Library and Museum, H. 2153, fol. 120v

chick in our drawing, the adult simurgh of the aforementioned folio has a hooked beak, a large eye with flaming plumage, three sharp talons per claw, and a trail of fabulous flames extending from its tail feathers. Despite its fantastic character, the bird is rendered in naturalistic detail, as are the two chicks in the nest to the left of the painting.

The line drawings of the Mongol period are defined by their studied observation of the natural world, vigorous and expressive use of line, and dynamic, active postures. Animals are almost always depicted in action or with a seething sense of potential energy. A large number of fourteenth century Ilkhanid and Jalayirid line drawings of simurghs, water fowl and foliage are preserved in the Diez Album A fol. 73 in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin (see Diez A fol. 73, p. 41, no. 4, p. 47, no. 4, p. 50, no. 3, p. 67, no. 1). The distinctive vigour and dynamism of Mongol drawing reached new heights under the reign of Jalayirid ruler Shayk Uways (r. 1356–1374). Alongside the so-called ‘Great Jalayirid *Shahnama*’, which includes a black line drawing illustration (see B. O’Kane, 2017, pp. 472–74; Z. Tanındı, 2017, inv. H. 2153, fol. 48v), and the aforementioned sheets in the Topkapi, a number of magnificent line drawings were made during this period. An extraordinary black ink drawing in the Topkapi Library, drawn in Baghdad or Tabriz during the Jalayirid period, depicts an otherworldly scene of a ‘Celestial Vision’ (fig. 4). This singular and accomplished drawing includes fantastical forms of a dragon and seraph, and recalls the otherworldly energy and vigorous, masterful draughtsmanship that characterizes our simurgh. The treatment of texture in the drawing, in particular the long, modelled feathers of the seraph, recalls the subtle shading of the plumage and tail feathers of the simurgh chick. Altogether, these comparanda point to an attribution of our drawing to the last quarter of the fourteenth century, when Jalayirid line drawing was at its peak.

The slightly later line-and-wash drawings decorating the margins of the *Divan* of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir (d. 1410) illustrate the developed Jalayirid taste for naturalistic line drawing (Washington, D.C., National Museum of Asian Art, inv. F1932.31-37). In comparison, the Persianate animal drawings of the Timurid (r. 1370–1507) and later Safavid periods (r. 1501 to 1722) lack the vigour and observed naturalism of Mongol-era drawing. See for example an illustration of the simurgh returning Zal to his father from an illustrated copy of the *Shahnama* made in Isfahan in 1602 (London, Khalili Collections, inv. MSS 544, folio 30b). Though Timurid and Safavid artists took up Mongol themes and typologies, later illustrations like this one tend to lack some of the dynamic naturalism that characterize Mongol painting and draughtmanship.





12

A bear chained to a post

Depicted in profile and facing the left, the chained bear in this drawing sits upright on his haunches with an alert look on his face. The form of the bear is depicted with soft, short modelled strokes of black pigment that endow the animal with dimensionality and texture. The body of the animal is covered in fine fur, which the artist emphasizes particularly around the head, back, and haunches. Meanwhile, the details of the face of the bear, with its long snout, curving mouth, and alert eye, are rendered with linear, calligraphic strokes of pigment. The curve of the front shoulder, paws, and sharp claws of the bear are also rendered with simple, clean lines that define the figure. The bear is secured to a small stump at the right side of the margin by a long meandering chain attached to its neck by a collar with a bell.

This sensitive, naturalistic drawing was made by an artist working in the style of Bihzad (c. 1455–60–1535), master painter and head of the court ateliers in Herat and Tabriz during the late Timurid (c. 1470–1506) and early Safavid (c. 1501–35) periods. The composition shows an animal chained to stump, a form which was introduced into the Persian pictorial lexicon by Bihzad in a famous drawing after the lesser-known mid-fifteenth century artist Wali (see E. Bahari, no. 11, p. 32). In Bihzad's masterful drawing of c. 1480–85, a camel with one leg chained to a stump appears alongside his groom (fig. 1; see E. Bahari, no. 19, p. 57). The composition was copied by Bihzad's contemporaries and followers throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as in Shaykh Muhammad's painting of c. 1556–57 (c.f. Washington DC, National Museum of Asian Art, inv. F1937.21). The same compositional structure has been adapted to depict the bear in our drawing, who is also chained to a comically small stump that would not seem to confine any but the most docile creature.

The style of this drawing of a bear is further related to the animal forms that appear in Timurid drawing and manuscript illustrations of the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. See for example a brush drawing of antelopes and lynxes dating to c. 1480, last published in the Aga Khan Collection, Geneva (fig. 2), in which the creatures are rendered in profile with a combination of soft modelling and bold lines (inv. M64; see E. Bahari, no. 16, p. 54). The depiction of the bear in a relatively fixed, motionless pose, further recalls the static representations of the animals that populate the pages of Timurid poetic manuscripts. Two illustrations of 'Majnun in the Desert' from a *Khamsa* of Nizami of c. 1490 now in the British Library, London, contain similar animal forms (fig. 3; see E. Bahari, no. 65, p. 124, no. 80, p. 143). In these works by Bihzad and his pupils, the bodies of the animals are carefully modelled while stronger lines are used for the details of the faces. The creatures are always rendered in profile in somewhat 'frozen' poses. In particular, the pose of the hind legs of the animals with raised haunches is similar to that of the bear in our drawing; see for examples the haunches of the two lynxes in the Aga Khan drawing and of the lion in the Topkapi drawing.

Timurid Herat or Safavid Tabriz
Late Timurid-early Safavid period
c. 1480–1550

12.5 x 7.2 cm (drawing); 32.5 x 20.5 cm (sheet); Black ink on paper, cropped and laid down within green, brown, and red borders, on card with later illuminated borders.

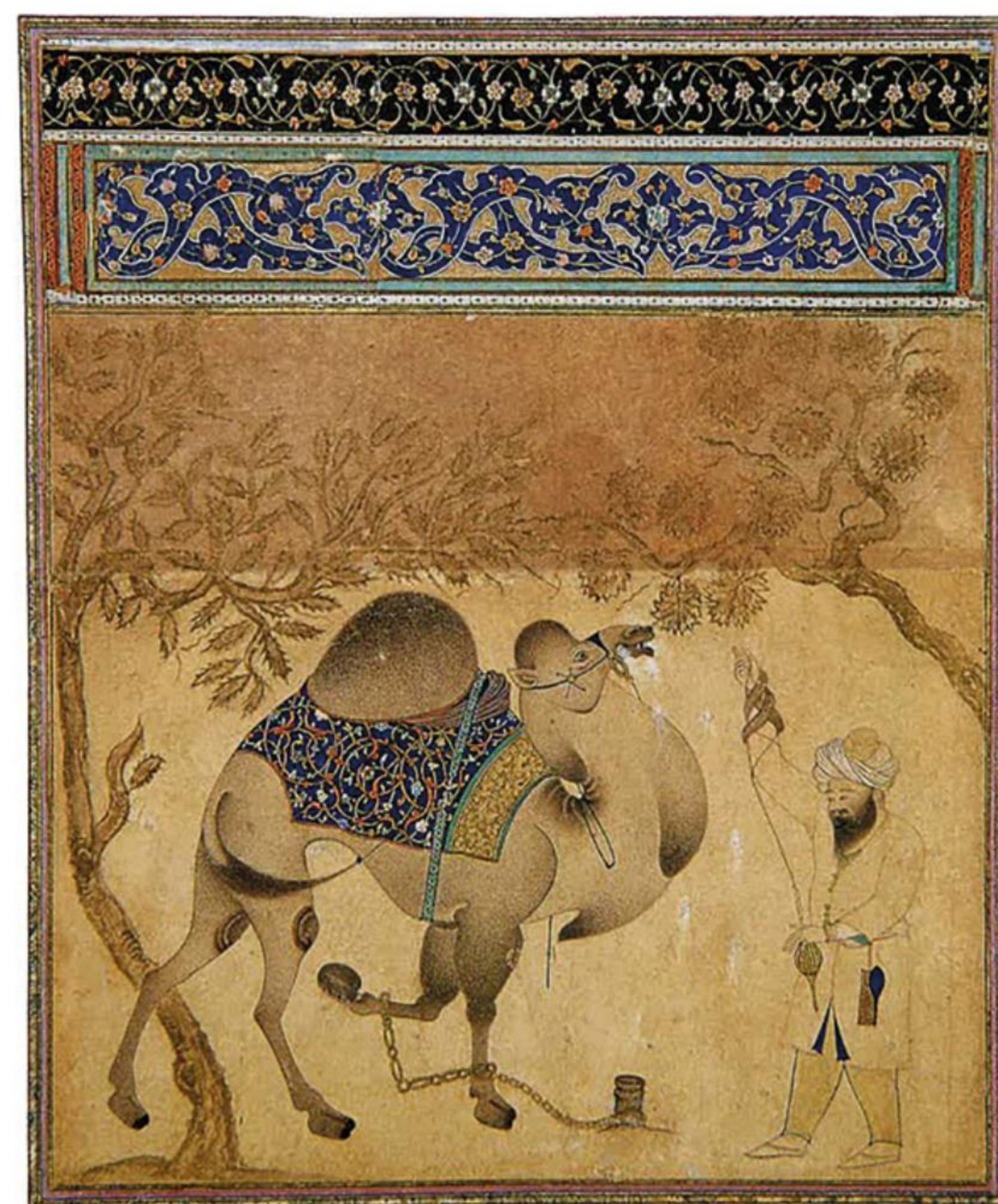


Fig. 1
 Bihzad (c. 1455–60–1535), *A Camel and Keeper*. c. 1480–85. Timurid Herat, Istanbul. Topkapi Palace Museum Library, inv. H2162, fol. 19r



Fig. 2
Attributed to Bihzad (c. 1455-60–1535), *Majnun with the Animals in the Desert*, from a *Khamsa* of Nizami. c. 1490, Timurid Herat. London, British Library, inv. Add. 25900



Fig. 3
Attributed to Bizhad (c. 1455-60–1535), *Two antelopes and two lynx*. c. 1480, Timurid Herat. 6.7 x 12 cm. Geneva, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection, inv. M64



Fig. 4
Lion chained to a post. Iran, Isfahan, c. 1600–50. 7.4 x 15.4 cm (drawing); ink on paper, mounted on an album page. Geneva, MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire, inv. 1971-0107-0405

The same compositional formula appears in later Safavid Isfahan-school drawing of the seventeenth century, though in drawings of lions rendered with the bolder, more calligraphic line that became popular at the time under the influence of Reza 'Abbasi. See for example two drawings of chained lions, one of which is from the Pozzi Collection, now in Geneva, at the Musée d'art et d'histoire (fig. 4), and another depicting a chained lion in a garden now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (inv. 14.582). While it is plausible that this drawing was made during the early Safavid period, the use of a more naturalistic, Bihzadian mode suggests that it was made before the advent of the Isfahan style that defined the seventeenth century. A later attribution to Bihzad at the bottom of this drawing has been rubbed out; almost certainly a spurious, later attribution, it does indicate that the artist who made this drawing was working in the distinctive pictorial mode introduced by Bihzad in the fifteenth century.



13

Shirin commits suicide on Khusraw's tomb

This dramatic painting of Shirin committing suicide on the grave of her husband, King Khusraw, is an example of Turkoman painting at its most vivid. Shirin, the Queen of Persia, appears at the centre of a chamber, where she has thrown herself upon her husband's tomb. In this image, Shirin has already committed suicide and is shown in her final moments. The theatrical scene is heightened by the dramatic, cloth-of-gold drapery framing the chamber and the window, as well as the use of contrasting colours throughout the tiled interior and dome. The coffin is covered with a lavish, purple and gold-brocaded textile. To the left of the scene, the geometric, tiled brickwork and the large blue-and-white inscriptional tile on the exterior of the building evokes contemporary architectural and decorative forms.

The painting comes from a copy of the *Khamasa* of Nizami dated Rajab 901 AH / March-April 1496 AD. Other paintings from the same manuscript have appeared at Sotheby's, London (*Arts of the Islamic World*, 15 October 2003, lot 23, 30 April 2003, lots 27–28, and 25 April 2002, lots 35–36). The manuscript colophon was misread at some point, dating the paintings to 904 AH/1498–99 CE. In style and spirit, illustrations from this manuscript can be compared to a *Shahnama* in the Kraus Collection, dated c. 1450–70 by Ernst Grube (see E.J. Grube, *Islamic Paintings*, The Kraus Collection, no. 52, p. 91), and several leaves from a variety of Turkman illustrated manuscripts in the Pozzi Collection (see B.W. Robinson, *Jean Pozzi: L'Orient d'un collectionneur*, nos. 46–50, pp. 230–32).

Turkman school, Iran
Rajab 901 AH / March-April 1496 CE

18.4 x 10.9 cm (painting); 34.2 x 19.3 cm (sheet); Gold, silver and gouache on paper, 9 lines of Persian in black nasta'liq divided into four columns on recto, 21 lines on verso, titles in blue thulth on a ground of gold vegetal scrolls, margins ruled in gold and blue.



14

Circle of Mahmud Muzahhib (fl. 1500–60) The death of Layla, from a poetic manuscript

This dispersed album leaf depicting the death of Layla was illustrated by a Bukhara school artist working in the atelier of the court artist Mahmud Muzahhib (fl. 1500–60). Mahmud Muzahhib ‘the gilder’ was the leading artist of the Bukhara school and the court artist of the Turko-Mongol Shaybanid dynasty (c. 1500–98). In addition to his reputation as the leading painter at the Shaybanid court, Mahmud Muzahhib was one of the artists who transferred the Herat style to the Uzbek court at Bukhara, when he was brought there by the ruler ‘Obayd-Allāh Khan (r. 1512–39). He later worked under the patronage of bibliophile ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz-Soltān (r. 1539–50) and Yār-Moḥammad Khan (r. 1550–56), both of whom commissioned a large number of lavishly illuminated manuscripts for the court library. This leaf probably originates from a richly illustrated manuscript of the epic love poem ‘Layla and Majnun’ from the *Khamṣa* of Nizami (composed c. 1188) or another poetic manuscript. Other illustrated Bukhara school manuscripts contain related scenes of Layla and Majnun, although the manuscript from which this leaf originates is unknown. Related examples include multiple volumes of Mir Ali Shir Nava’i’s *Khamṣa* in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (inv. Ms. Elliott 318), and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (inv. Suppl. Pers. 1149); as well as a leaf from a manuscript with a scene from Layla and Majnun in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (fig. 1).

The painting depicts the death of Layla, her funeral, and the death of Majnun in the wilderness. The scene is divided into different episodes. In an open tent in the background of the painting, the deceased figure of Layla is depicted, lying back across the lap of a female figure dressed in red and green. Below, the textile-covered coffin of the deceased Layla is carried by three men. Lavish textiles decorate the coffin fitting for a noble personage. To the left of the coffin, a large group of mourning women with long hair and black veils tear at their faces and breasts in gestures of grief. To the right of the coffin, a group of men in mourning weep into their handkerchiefs. One tears open his robe, while another raises his arms in disbelief. The figure of Majnun is represented in the bottom right corner of the painting, as an emaciated, shoeless figure with wild hair and an open, black robe, lying in a state of unconsciousness on the ground with his other accoutrements strewn about in the foreground. This represents the episode in the doomed love story where Majnun is found dead in the wilderness by his beloved’s grave.

A number of elements suggest that this painting was made by an artist working in the atelier of Shaybanid Bukhara’s greatest court artist, Mahmud Muzahhib. The complex composition and treatment of space, the glimmering golden foreground and background and the architectural renderings of textile-covered tents, all recall the style of Muhammad Muzahhib. Certain elements, however, such as the slightly crude faces of the figures and the details of the composition, are less sophisticated than the work of the master, which suggests that this painting was completed by another Bukhara school artist working in the atelier.

Bukhara, Shaybanid Dynasty
c. 1540–80

19.5 x 13.4 cm (drawing); 37.7 x 26.7 cm (sheet); Album page with painting to recto; calligraphic sample to verso. The painting originally from a folio of an poetic manuscript; polychrome and gold on paper, with salmon and gold speckled border, mounted on wide beige card margin. The verso with quatrain of Persian nasta’liq calligraphy mounted on the album page; the calligraphic sample in reserve, on a gold background, the borders with blue and gold-speckled paper. Condition: In good overall condition, with a small hole to the calligraphy, some staining, traces of adhesive to the margins, minor retouching.

Provenance
Soudavar Collection
Private Collection, Paris, 1975–2000



Fig. 1
Majnun before an assembly of sages, from ‘Layla and Majnun’. Bukhara. c. 1583–98. 25.8 x 16.5 cm (sheet); ink, colour, and gold on card. Paris, Musée du Louvre, MAO 713

15

Majnun in the Wilderness From a manuscript of Nizami's *Khamisa*

This large folio from an illuminated manuscript of Nizami's *Khamisa* depicts a scene from the poem 'Layla and Majnun', where Majnun is depicted as a hermit in the wilderness, taking refuge with the animals of the desert. This part of the story takes place after his separation from his beloved Layla following the death of his father. The forest animals in the scene gather around Majnun, who is seated on a large rocky outcrop on the banks of a curving stream. The animals, which include deer, a snow leopard, a lion, a gazelle, and other quadrupeds, are instinctively drawn to Majnun and encircle him within a paradisiacal landscape with green foliage and blooming flowers. In the story, his kindness has a miraculous effect on the animals who follow his example and cease to attack one another.

The text immediately preceding the painting describes a restless gazelle, depicted in the centre of the scene, which Majnun calls out to and caresses. The gazelle is a poignant symbol and reminder of Majnun's longing for his beloved Layla. In the poem, rumours spread of Majnun's strange situation and travellers came from afar to witness his remarkable court among the animals. These figures appear in the background of the painting, peering out and conversing among themselves from behind rocky outcroppings. The placement of the figures in this part of the composition is typical of Shiraz painting from the late sixteenth century. Of particular interest is the figure of an onlooker carrying a bow in the upper right corner of the landscape, whose round face and sharp eyes are reminiscent of the figures seen in Bukhara painting of the period.

The influence of royal Safavid manuscript production led to an increase in size, iconographic complexity, richness of illumination and variety of palette in Shiraz manuscripts of the late sixteenth century. The first Safavid manuscripts produced in a larger format were copies of the Firdausi's *Shahnama*, however, other popular works such as the *Khamisa* of Nizami were also produced with larger dimensions during the 1570s (see Uluc 2006, pp. 225–26). Many of these developments are visible in this large, colourful leaf, although its proportions are not as extreme as a number of the *Khamisa* manuscripts of the 1580s, some of which exceed forty centimetres in height (see McWilliams, 2013, nos. 104–11).

Iran, Shiraz
c. 1575

19.5 x 13.4 cm (painting); 37.7 x 26.7 cm (sheet); Ink, opaque watercolour, silver and gold on paper

Provenance
Private collection, UK

اورا بر خوش خواند پست
 مراعت سود بر سرش
 چشمش همه روزه بوسه
 میگرد و چشم پستان
 مردم تعجب از حسابش
 دور رفتن خوش در گاش
 سر خا که موس پید
 تا دیده بر و بر وین



هر روز پافوی ز را
 کردی بر اوت ار کا
 او روی از ان خوش ش
 تا روز نذر او ش
 وان جرم شین جرم سیر
 بد دل کن جلد دلیر
 یکم زه از ان نوا که بور
 باقی بدوا حج که کرد
 از پس که ریحی و نوزی
 او دی بدوان بر و نوزی
 مرد که بدید بچه بر و نوزی
 روزی ده خوش شین

امروز که ادبینه مرا و رانما

می نوش کن از قدح به جای جاست



مروزا اگر یک قدحی می خورد

امروز دو نور که سیدالایاست

16

Reza 'Abbasi (c. 1565–1635)

A leopard chasing a bear up a tree

The fine brush drawing on the verso of this double-sided album page features a scene of a leopard chasing a bear into the upper branches of a tree. It is ascribed in the lower left-hand corner to 'Aqa Reza', the great Persian master draughtsman and Safavid court painter also known as Reza 'Abbasi (c. 1565–1635). Reza's style is characterised by the fluid, calligraphic line that appears throughout his painted compositions and revolutionary line drawings, which defined the Isfahan style of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The very small inscription that reads 'Aqa Reza' is almost certainly a genuine signature, rather than a later, spurious attribution. It is rendered with the same wording and in the small, less calligraphic hand associated with inscriptions found on Reza's early works dating to c. 1585–1605 (see Canby, 1996, cats. 4, 18–20, 24–25, 31, pp. 25–63). In addition to the evidence of the inscription, the dynamism of the drawing and specific compositional elements suggest that it is one of the calligraphic drawings combined with softer brushwork that form a large part of Reza's early oeuvre.

At the base of the drawing, a spotted leopard with open jaws claws at the trunk of a tree, its rear haunches lifted in a predatory pose and its long tail extending all the way to the right-hand margin of the drawing. Above, a frightened bear perches on an upper branch of the same tree, peering down over a leafy frond at the predator rearing up at him from below. The leafy tree acts as the setting for this encounter between predator and prey. It branches upwards and outwards, while the limb of the tree upon which the bear is perched droops downward perilously towards the leopard. The bolder, calligraphic details of the drawing, such as the outline of the leopard's body and face, the anxious face of the bear, the leaves of the tree, and the swirling cloud forms above, are rendered in decisive strokes of black pigment. These elements contrast with details of the drawing that have been finished in a gouache wash, such as the base of the tree trunk, the grassy mound on which the leopard is positioned, and the spots of the leopard. The cloud formations bunched in the background appear to be racing across the sky toward the right-hand margin of the page, adding to the sense of urgency within the drawing. Together, these dynamic elements create a sense of movement within the drawing, emphasising the precarious situation of the anxious-looking bear.

The lively composition of this drawing is typical of Reza 'Abbasi, whose strong lines, fluid brushstrokes and dynamic, psychological compositions define his style. The style of this drawing is related to an early drawing of a man drinking from a stream dated c. 1585–87, which also employs a combination of bold calligraphic lines with softer brushwork (see Canby 1996, cat. 4, p. 25). This stylistic combination appears in a number of Reza's other early works, four of which are also signed with the same wording, 'Aqa Reza', that appears on our drawing (see Canby, 1996, cats. 4, 14,

Iran, Isfahan
Safavid Dynasty
c. 1590

15.6 x 12.6 cm (drawing); 29 x 17.6 cm (sheet); Recto with a nasta'liq quatrain in black, panels of smaller red nasta'liq in two corners, in a blue border with further nasta'liq panels on pink margins with gold floral illumination, verso with a pen and ink drawing of a leopard looking up at a bear in a tree, a tiny attribution in the lower left hand corner, laid down between pink borders with panels of nasta'liq on blue margins with gold floral illumination, inscribed with signature 'Aqa Riza' to lower left-hand corner of the page.

Provenance

Collection of Professor Rudolf Gelpke (1928–72), Switzerland



Fig. 1

Reza 'Abbasi (1565–1635), *A man chased by a bear*. Iran, Qazvin, Safavid dynasty, c. 1590–95. 10.4 x 12.2 cm; Ink and pigment on paper. London, British Museum, inv. 1920,0917,0.254.3



Fig. 2
Reza 'Abbasi (c. 1565–1635),
Young man in a landscape.
Iran, Isfahan, c. 1600. Istanbul,
Topkapi Saray, inv. MS. H. 2165,
fol. 536

Fig. 3
Attributed to Reza 'Abbasi
(c. 1565–1635), *Cheetah
Trainer*. Iran, Isfahan, c. 1590.
13.6 x 10.1 cm; Gray-black ink
on silver-flecked off-white
paper. Cambridge MA, Harvard
Art Museums, inv. 2011.533



16, 20). This group includes a closely related drawing of a man being chased by a bear dated to c. 1592, now in the British Museum, London (fig. 1; see Canby, 1996, London, cat. 17, p. 49). The features of the British Museum bear and the dynamism of the scene find close precedents in our drawing. Another drawing from this group depicting a youth in a natural landscape in the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul, uses the same combination of strong lines for the outlines of the figure with a looser rendering of the landscape (fig. 2; see Canby, 1996, cat. 20, p. 50). In addition to these stylistic consistencies, the Topkapi drawing offers compelling comparative evidence for the original signature on our work. The 'Aqa Reza' inscription on the Topkapi drawing is squeezed into the lower left corner of the page. The first part of the signature is in a slightly different hand, implying that it was added later and that the second portion of the signature, 'Aqa Reza', is original both to the Topkapi drawing and to our example.

In addition to the evidence of the inscriptions, the vivacity and distinct sense of movement add to the likelihood of an ascription of this drawing to Reza. The dynamism associated with Reza is evident in many elements of the drawing, but most notably in the hind paws of the leopard, the anxious, humanistic face of the bear; and in the composition of the tree with racing clouds above. Altogether, these elements give the impression of a fleeting, tenuous moment in time that mark it out as a drawing by the great master Reza 'Abbasi.

Another drawing of a feline predator attributed to Reza 'Abbasi from c. 1590, shows a spotted cheetah on the back of a horse, in the collection of Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge MA (fig. 3; see Welch and Masteller, 2004, pp. 65–66, no. 12).



17

Reza ‘Abbasi (c. 1565–1635) Seated dervish in a landscape

The Persian inscription to the upper right of the folio reads:

Dar qazvin tarh-e in shodeh bud va dar esfahan ba’d az si sal dar ruz-e chaharshanbeh hastom (?) -e shahr-e shavval...iqbal sana [10]41 be-rang shod...raqam-e kamineh reza‘abbasi

‘This was designed in Qazvin and coloured 30 years later in Isfahan on Wednesday 8th (?) of the month of Shawwal, fortune, year [10]41... Drawing of the humble Reza ‘Abbasi’

This tinted drawing of a forlorn mendicant holding an empty begging bowl was drawn in Qazvin in 1603 AD by Reza ‘Abbasi (c. 1565–1635) the great court artist of the Safavid ruler Shah Abbas (r. 1588–1629). According to the unusually long and specific inscription on the upper right-hand side of the drawing, it was tinted some thirty years later, on 8 Shawwal 1041 / 27 April 1632. The drawing was probably tinted and inscribed at this date by one of Reza’s students as an honorific gesture toward the end of the artist’s life. The second, lower part of the inscription is written in a different, earlier hand and names Reza as its designer: *‘raqam-e kamineh reza ‘abbasi / drawing by the humble Reza ‘Abbasi’*. The contents of the two inscriptions suggest that this is probably an original drawing by the artist, which was coloured thirty years after it was originally drawn. The content and hand of the inscription, the subject and style of the drawing, as well the existence of a known work after this drawing by Reza’s most famous student, Mu‘in Musavvir (lit. Mu‘in ‘the painter’) (c. 1610–15–1692), further indicate that this work may be attributed to the great Persian draughtsman Reza ‘Abbasi.

The forlorn beggar at the centre of this drawing curls around the gnarled trunk of a tree and rests his head on his arm in a gesture of penury. The figure wears a green cap and is dressed in a yellow-orange robe with a white shawl draped around his shoulders, suggesting that he is affiliated with a Sufi order. He holds an empty begging bowl in his left hand, into which he appears to gaze downwards as he contemplates his circumstances. His sensitive face is rendered with downcast eyes and ungroomed facial hair, further reflecting his abject condition as he walks the Sufi path toward self-annihilation and enlightenment. Three birds fly overhead, diving through the air toward the figure with open beaks, as if singing to the forlorn figure.

The same iconography appears in another tinted drawing of a beggar attacked by dogs in a barren landscape by Reza and dated to c. 1619, now in the Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art (fig. 1). While it is more complex,

Iran, Qazvin and Isfahan

Drawn on March 1603 AD; tinted 8 Shawwal 1041 AH/27 April 1632 AD

17.6 x 10 cm (drawing); 37.5 x 25 cm (sheet); Green, yellow, and brown pigments on paper; mounted on an album page.



هو
در قرون
روح این شجر
و در صفهان
چو پیل در
وز
سحر خال
اقبال را
رستم گنبد بهار

the Keir drawing shares a number of compositional similarities with our drawing, including the abject figure of the beggar, the gnarled tree, and the three birds with open beaks. The Keir Collection drawing also has a long and specific inscription stating that it was designed by Reza after a composition by Behzad (fl. 1470–1506) and coloured later by his son, Muhammad Shafi ‘Abbasi (1628–74). A number of the other drawings made ‘after Behzad’ by Reza in his later period c. 1619–35 are also partially or fully coloured and share stylistic details with our drawing (see Canby, 1996, pp. 129–36). See for example the form of the tree in a drawing of Majnun in the wilderness (Canby, cat. 96, p. 133), the shading of the rocks in a tinted drawing with a traveller (Canby, cat. 99, p. 135), and the leaves of a tree in a study of a bird (Canby, cat. 98, p. 131) in Reza’s coloured works c. 1630–50. The handwriting of the signed inscriptions on the works dating c. 1625–35 are also closely related to the hand that penned the inscription on these drawings (see Canby, cats. 96, 98, 99, 100–15, 123–28, pp. 195–200).

A painting by Reza’s most illustrious student, Mu‘in Musavvir (c. 1610–15–1693), in the collection of the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad depicts the same subject of a forlorn mendicant under a tree (fig. 1). The painting follows Reza’s composition almost exactly, although it is drawn in mirror-image reverse and fully painted in colour. The existence of this painting corroborates Reza’s authorship of our version, as Mu‘in is known to have had access to and copied a number of works by his master Reza. These include the aforementioned composition of the poet attacked by dogs in the Keir Collection. Mu‘in drew a version of the same composition, also in mirror-reverse, which is now in the Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran (fig. 2; inv. no. 33-421). It is of particular interest that Mu‘in copied the drawing that his master Reza made after Behzad, which were made during the same later period that our drawing was made. This is also the time when Mu‘in entered Reza’s workshop, around 1630.

The subject matter and style of this drawing accord with Reza’s style during his later period, after he left the court atelier in Isfahan between c. 1603–10. During and after this period, the subject matter in Reza’s oeuvre shifted towards drawings of outcast members of society with whom he was consorting, Sufis, and other such figures. Dervishes and Sufi mystics were popular subjects for genre drawing and painting in the Isfahan style established by Reza. A sampling of related Isfahan-style drawings include a dervish in the wilderness by Afzal’ in the British Museum, London (inv. ME 1948,1211,0.19); a man beneath a tree (M.73.5.467) and a Sufi in a landscape (inv. M.73.5.582), both in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and dervish in landscape smoking a pipe in the National Museum of Asian Art, Washington DC (inv. F1947.23).

The tinted elements of the drawing accord more with his later works of the 1630s (see Canby, 1996, cat. 107) and that of his students.



Fig. 1
Mu‘in Musavvir (c. 1610–15–1692) after Reza ‘Abbasi, *A mendicant under a tree*. Iran, Isfahan, c. 1650–1700. Hyderabad, Salar Jung Museum



Fig. 2
 'On the Advantages of Silence', tinted drawing mounted as an album folio, illustrating a story from the *Gulistan* (Rose Garden) of Sa'di Muhammad Shafi' 'Abbasi (1628–74) and Reza 'Abbasi, 1619, Persia. 33.7 x 21.6 cm; tinted drawing, detached folio. Dallas, The Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art.





18

Follower of Reza 'Abbasi A woman with a voluminous veil

A standing woman with an outstretched arm wearing an elaborate, full-length veil, is the subject of this Safavid genre drawing from the first half of the seventeenth century. The sensitive drawing depicts a beautiful upper-class woman, with rounded cheeks, long arched eyebrows, and full, rosy lips. Two thick ringlets fall either side of her face, framing narrow, slanted eyes with dark pupils under long, curving black brows that meet above the bridge of her strong nose. Her red lips with shaded smile lines and full cheeks complete the image of a classical Persian beauty, and also closely recall the facial features of a drawing of a woman with a voluminous veil from by Reza 'Abbasi (c. 1565–1635) from the Clive Album, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (fig. 1; see Canby, 1996, cat. 109, p. 148). The treatment of the eyes and lips in particular reflect the influence of Reza. The textural tendrils that escape from her headdress and frame her face contrast with the straight, assured lines of the veil which falls toward her feet in voluminous pleats. The style of the drawing, with its long, calligraphic lines and an emphasis on texture and volume, suggests that it was made by an artist working in the close circle of the master draughtsman. It may well have been drawn by a contemporary such as Habiballah (fl. c. 1600) (see B.W. Robinson, 1965, pl. 57, p. 86).

Standing in a three-quarter pose, our figure is rendered in an outdoor setting indicated by the leafy foliage at her feet and the Chinese-style clouds rushing across the sky toward the right margin above. Her long veil is pinned in place above her head with a golden, plumed *aigrette*, and frames her face. She holds the veil taut in her outstretched right hand, from where it cascades downwards in pleats toward her bunched trousers and pointed slippers. On the other side, the shawl cascades downwards more loosely, skimming the outside of her arm, and following the curve of her arm inward to her hand, where a sash is looped and tied around her waist. The composition of a standing figure with outstretched hand is a genre image that appears frequently in Safavid drawing and painting. The same composition appears in a number of examples of Isfahan drawings from the early seventeenth century.

Related examples include a drawing of a young man with prayer beads attributed to Reza 'Abbasi, as well as a drawing of a woman holding out a cup attributed to the artist Habib Allah Savaji (fl. 17th century), both in the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge MA (inv. 14.614, inv. 2002.50.17). Another related drawing of a woman with outstretched arm holding a wine bottle is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (inv. M.73.5.14). The LACMA drawing depicts a woman wearing a buttoned overcoat, which is similar to the style of the full, buttoned overcoat fastened with gold buttons and creases along the front seam worn by the figure in our drawing. The buttoned coat recalls a similar garment worn by Shahzadeh Muhammad Beg of Georgia in a c. 1620–23 portrait attributed to Reza 'Abbasi and now in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (inv. MS.4593, fol. 50a; see Canby, 1996, cat. 111, p. 149).

Iran, Isfahan
Safavid Dynasty
c. 1625–50

18.2 x 10 cm (drawing); 32.5 x 20.6 cm (sheet); Black ink, red pigment, and gold on paper, within red and green rules, laid down on card within floral borders and mounted on an album page.



Fig. 1
Attributed to Reza 'Abbasi (c. 1565–1635), *Woman with a wine flask*. Iran, Isfahan, c. 1630. Drawn and painted in ink and watercolour on paper, gold on borders. London, Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. IS.133:25/B-1964

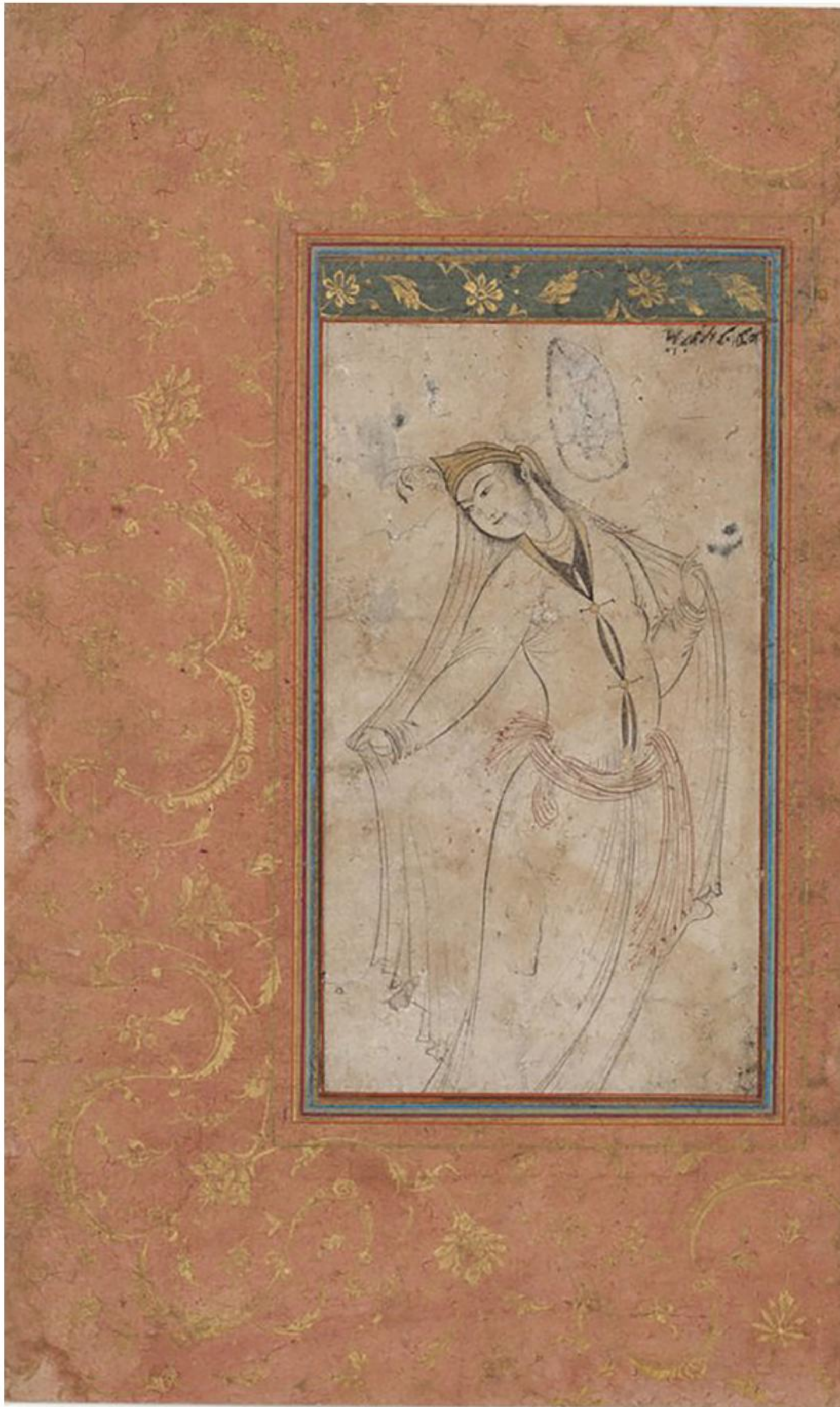


Fig. 2
Follower of Reza 'Abbasi, *Lady removing her veil*, c. 1620. Iran, Isfahan style, 15.3 x 8.6 cm (drawing); brown and red ink on paper, mounted on an album page. Geneva, MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire, inv. 1971-0107-0384



Fig. 3
Attributed to Reza 'Abbasi (c. 1565–1635), *A Maiden Reclines*. Iran, Qazvin, Late 16th century. 34 x 23.7 cm; black ink on off-white paper. Cambridge MA, Harvard Art Museums, inv. 2011.536

The drawing of the voluminous veil also recalls a composition by Reza 'Abbasi with a maiden wrapped in a full-length shawl reclining in a garden from the Stuart Carey Welch collection, now in the Harvard Art Museums (fig. 3). The rendering of the veil and its voluminous nature in both drawings probably reflects an interest in Western print sources and the treatment of textiles in European art.

The use of minimal landscape elements and racing clouds to create an atmospheric setting within the drawing further recalls Reza 'Abbasi's dynamic compositions. See for example a drawing of a bagpipe player, now in the Harvard Art Museums (inv. 2011.522), in which Reza creates a sense of setting and atmosphere with a single drifting cloud and a grouping of simple rocks.



19

A couple in a landscape

A man and a woman seated in a landscape beneath a flowering tree are the focus of this springtime scene. This type of amorous scene is one of the most popular subjects in Persian painting of the seventeenth century, although it appears more rarely in drawing of the period. The figures in this scene are seated at a modest distance, separated by the flowing stream that runs between them. They are dressed in finery, as evidenced by the gold ribbon embellishing the male figure's turban, the gold embroidered shawl of the woman and her golden sash, and the double-string of beads around her neck. These details indicate the couple's high social status. Although a stream separates them, the flowering tree between the couple suggests a successful romantic union.

The setting and the objects that surround the couple suggest a scene of leisure and sensory pleasures. The male figure kneels on the ground, leaning towards his companion across the stream, as he raises one hand to play his drum. Across from him, the woman sits on her knees, her elegant arms and hands crossed in a modest gesture as she gazes across the stream with a pensive look on her face. She appears to be lost in thought, or to be absorbed in the beating music of her companion's drum. Her rounded cheeks, long, arching eyebrows, and pursed lips form the picture of a Persian beauty. A wine bowl and another object, possibly a water pipe, are placed on the banks of the stream between them. In the background, a rendering of a city with a fortified wall with six archways and multiple domes, emphasises the remote, natural setting of the scene. A related drawing of an amorous couple in a landscape is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 1; see Swietochowski and Babaie, 1989, no. 24, pp. 58–59).

Though this genre scene appears frequently in Persian painting of this period, certain elements of the composition reflect the influence of Indian pictorial modes. The style of the male figure's turban, his drum, as well as the embroidered gold sash and brightly coloured orange robe of the female figure, recall Deccani forms. The sash of the male figure, however, appears more Safavid in style, with its many pleats and draping ends. Other elements are also distinctly Persian, such as the rendering of the tree and the clouds in the sky above. The Safavids had close ties with the Persianate courts of India, such as the Qutb Shahis (1496–1687) of Golconda, where many Persian artists were sent to work in the seventeenth century. This drawing may have been made by a Persian artist who travelled to the courts of the Deccan. Equally, it could have been made by an artist working in the Safavid atelier who was aware of Indian pictorial modes and styles and incorporated them into his work.

**Iran, Isfahan; possibly the Deccan
c. 1650**

19 x 10.3 cm (tinted drawing); 32.5 x 20.5 cm (sheet); Tinted drawing in polychrome and gold on paper, mounted on an album page with multiple floral borders.



Fig. 1

Young man and woman in a landscape. Iran, c. 1600–50. 10.5 x 17.2 cm; Ink, transparent and opaque watercolour, and gold on paper. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 45.174.9





20

Attributed to Muhammad Zaman (fl. c. 1649–1700) Bahram Gur facing the Dragon

The archetypal Persian hero, Bahram Gur, is the subject of this painting that once served as an illustration for a manuscript of the *Haft Paykar* or ‘Seven Beauties’ by the twelfth-century poet Nizami. In this scene, Bahram Gur takes aim at an open-mouthed dragon, illustrating the section of the poem where the Sasanian king slays a fearsome dragon and, in doing so, recovers a treasure from a nearby cave. This version of the scene was probably painted by Muhammad Zaman (fl. c. 1649–1700), a Persian artist working in the imperial atelier at the Safavid court (r. 1501–1736) in Isfahan in the second half of the seventeenth century.

The most distinguished painter at the court of Shah Sulayman (r. 1666–94), Muhammad Zaman was a successful court artist who worked in the European style, or *Farangi-sazi* mode, that emerged in Iran in the late Safavid period. It was popular from the accession of Shah ‘Abbas I (1587–1629) through to the death of Shah Sulayman. Shah ‘Abbas’ interest in diplomatic ties with Europe and his openness to receiving European travellers and diplomats at his court in Isfahan paved the way for an influx of new forms and pictorial modes in the arts. The arrival of Europeans and the circulation of prints, engravings, and other objects, led to the development of *Farangi-sazi*. Muhammad Zaman was the foremost painter of this period and style, whose ingenious combinations of European, Mughal and native Persian imagery resulted in dream-like paintings infused with texture and bold colours. Despite the artist’s fluid ability to adapt European forms, his compositions remain grounded in the Persian pictorial tradition, and he synthesizes exotic forms without sacrificing style or quality.

Muhammad Zaman depicted the scene of Bahram Gur slaying the dragon on multiple occasions. In 1539–43 CE he was commissioned by the imperial household to illustrate three pages of an incomplete copy of Nizami’s *Khamsa* originally ordered by Shah Tahmasp, now held in the British Library, London (fig. 1; BL. OR 2265, fol. 203v). One of the pages is in illustration of the same scene, in the moments after Bahram Gur has shot the dragon in the eyes and is riding away from the beast. The British Library paintings are notable for their use of a stippling technique, which is also visible in the treatment of Bahram Gur and the dragon in this painting. The technique was probably adapted by Muhammad Zaman as a response to the arrival of European pocket-watches decorated with portrait miniatures in Isfahan. These miniatures were painted with a stippling technique on enamel and were prized within elite circles in Iran as far back as the late sixteenth century. The iconography of the Virgin and Child found on a number of surviving watches made by the French watchmaker Jacques Goullon (fl. c.1626–71) are closely related to Muhammad Zaman’s *Madonna with the Infant Jesus and Saint John*, now in the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore. This suggests a direct connection between these luxury objects and the development of new, Europeanising painting techniques (fig. 4; see Langer, 2013, pp. 198–205, no. 99–100).

Iran, probably Isfahan
c. 1675–1700

16.2 x 25.1 cm (painting); Opaque pigments heightened with gold mounted on card, slightly reduced in size, areas of creasing to the surface and traces of lacquer deposits which have penetrated the fibre of the paper.

Provenance
Collection of Professor Rudolf Gelpke (1928–72), Switzerland

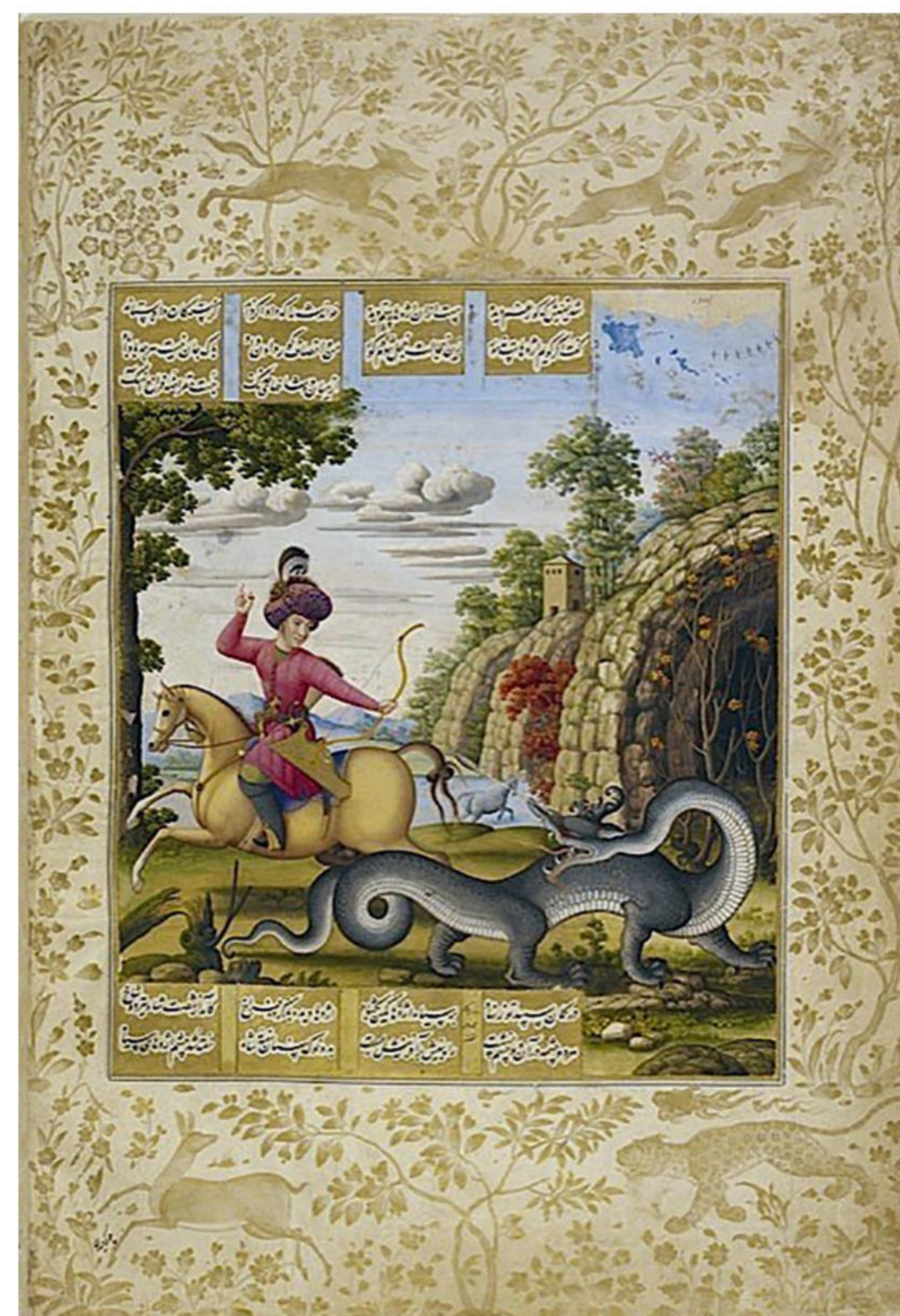


Fig. 1
Muhammad Zaman, Bahram Gur Killing the Dragon, added to the *Khamsa* for Shah Tahmasp, copied between 946 and 949 (1539–43). London, British Library, Ms. Or. 2265, fol. 203b. Iran, Mazandaran, dated 1086 (1675/76). 21.9 x 18.1 cm (painting); Opaque watercolour on paper. London, The British Library, inv. Or. 2265, fol. 203v



Fig. 2
A qizilbash and his steed entangled by a dragon. Iran, Qazvin (?), Mid-16th century. 37.8 x 24.1 cm; Pigments and gold on paper. New York, The Morgan Library and Museum, inv. MS M.386.6r



Fig. 3
A Hero on Horseback Fighting a Dragon, Attributed to Muhammad Zaman (fl. 1649–1700), Iran, pre-1675. 47.5 x 33 cm (sheet): Pigments, silver, and gold on paper. St Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, inv. E-14, fol. 95r

Although Muhammad Zaman's oeuvre is associated with the adaptation of European imagery, mostly sourced from Dutch prints circulating in early modern Persia, the artist's genius was not in his ability to copy exotic imagery. Rather, his combination of European naturalism and perspectival techniques with existing Persian pictorial traditions allowed for the formation of a dynamic new style. For example, this painting assimilates key European elements, such as the minimalist use of shading around the forms of the protagonists and the inclusion of a panoramic background with a low, perspectival horizon. Nevertheless, the composition of the scene and the visual language of the painting remain firmly rooted in the Persian tradition. See, for example, an earlier Persian typology of a rider fighting a dragon from mid-sixteenth-century Qazvin which depicts a dragon coiled around its rider (fig. 2).

Muhammad Zaman produced another version of this scene, in which Bahram Gur wields a dagger at the dragon, now in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg (fig. 3). The form of the dragon's curved serpentine body, as well as its open-mouthed head and pronounced horns, are closely related to those in our painting. While it is possible this was made by a student or follower of Muhammad Zaman, the forms, style, and content of the painting are so distinctive, and the quality so high, that it seems it was most likely made by the artist himself. The form of the dragon's head in our painting is also related to contemporary Safavid metalwork forms, especially to terminals found on processional standards or '*alams*' (see Canby, 2003, cat. no. 8.17, p. 222).



Fig. 4
Jacques Goullons (fl. 1626–71). Watch. c. 1645–50. 6.7 x 5.9 cm; Case and dial: painted enamel on gold; movement: gilded brass and steel, partly blued. New York, Metropolitan Museum; inv. 17.190.1627





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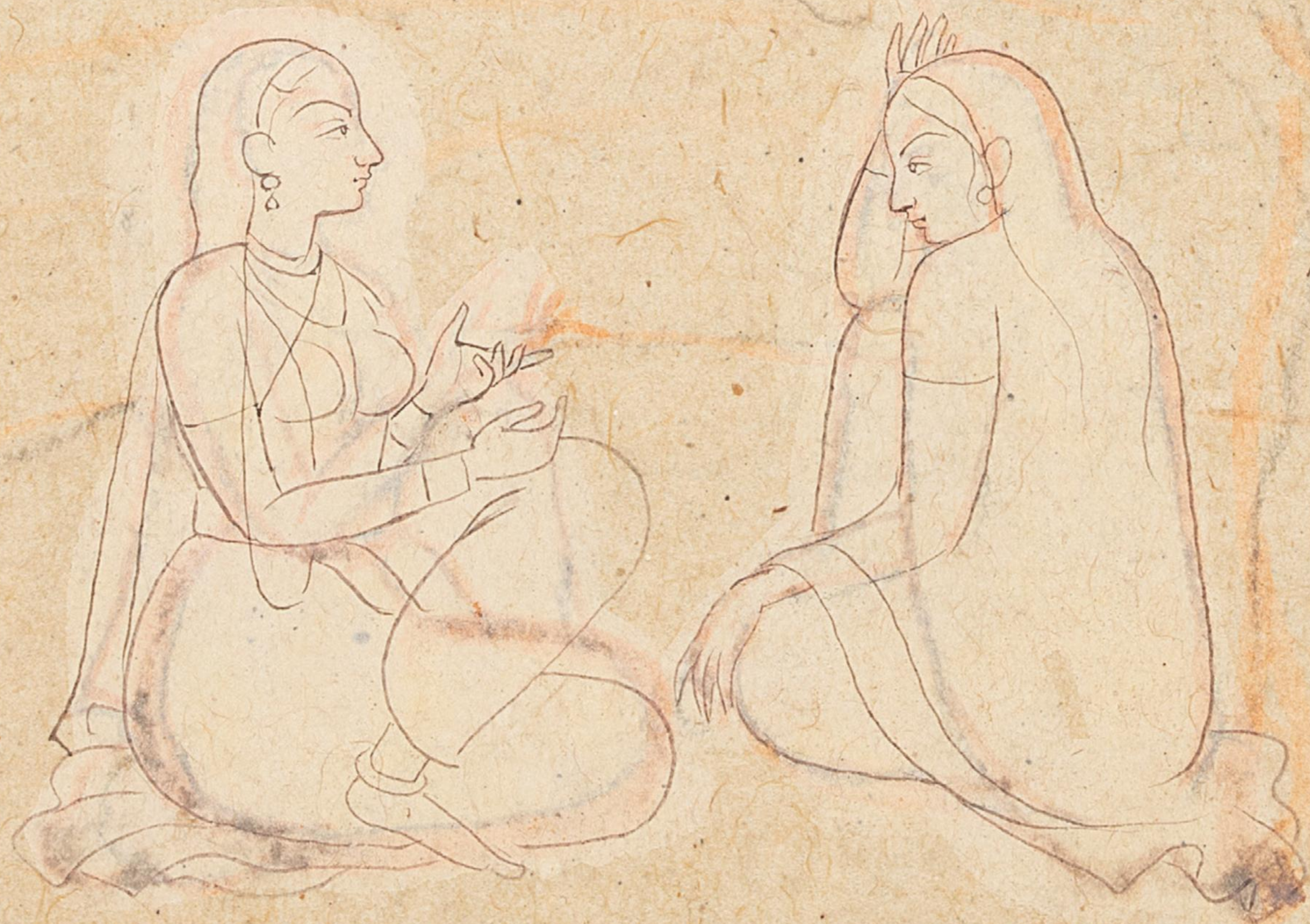
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